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THE LIFE OF
LORD EDWARD
FITZGERALD .





J. Fitzgibbon

. . . THE LIFE OF . . .
LORD EDWARD
FITZGERALD

1763—1798

By IDA A. TAYLOR

Author of "Sir Walter Raleigh"

WITH SIXTEEN FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
AND A PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE

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PREFATORY NOTE

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I. A. T.

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LIFE OF LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD

CHAPTER I

Dublin and the Geraldines—St. Werburgh's Church—Lord Edward FitzGerald's Grave—His Career—A Cause—Varying Estimates of his Character—Unfitted for Leadership.

NEAR the east gate—formerly the gate of St. Mary Les Dames—of the city of Dublin stand a group of buildings notable indeed.

Near by is the Castle, with all its historical and political associations, past and present. A stone's throw removed is the sombre edifice whose foundation dates from the days of faith when, "about the year of our Lord 1038, the Danish Prince of Dublin gave to Donat, Bishop of that see, a place to erect a church to the honour of the Holy Trinity." So the Black Book of Christchurch records the first gift to the famous Priory of the Trinity, now known as Christchurch Cathedral. Again, in close proximity to the priory (where in 1562 the monument of another alien, this time of Norman blood, Earl Strongbow,

was broken and repaired) the City Hall has replaced, by a double secularisation, Cork House, on the consecrated ground where once stood the Convent and Church of St. Mary Les Dames ; while, last of the group, at an almost equal distance from the Castle on the farther side, the modern Church of St. Werburgh, with its eighteenth-century, pseudo-classic frontage, its railed-in pavement and gaslit portico, remains to tell that once an Anglo-Norman foundation imported from over the sea the name and fame of Saint Werberga, sometime—in those remote ages when blood-royalty and sainthood went hand-in-hand—Princess of East Anglia and Abbess, as her mother and grandmother before her, of the Monastery of Ely.

Close neighbours, these three religious houses shared with the Castle many a memory of past days ; and amongst these memories is ever and again recurrent the name of Ireland's foster-sons, the Geraldines. To them she gave true birthrights. With her traditions, her stones, her sepulchres, and her dust, their race is associated beyond possibility of severance.

In the Castle FitzGerald after FitzGerald ruled, whether as the King's Deputy or despite of him. In the Castle, too, one after another lay imprisoned. In the Priory close at hand was entombed Maurice FitzGerald, Earl of Kildare, dead in 1390—once a prisoner in the Castle, afterwards Deputy there. Little more than a century later, in the choir of the same church, St. Mary's Chapel was built by

another Earl Gerald, who, dying the following year, 1513, bequeathed "his best gown of gold and purple to make dresses for the priests," already endowed by him with vestments of cloth-of-gold, a yearly commemoration, with other spiritual privileges, being accorded to the donor and doubtless observed for many a year. In the Priory, not a score of years earlier, this same Gerald must have borne a leading part in the ceremony when—our Lady's statue in the adjacent Convent-church of St. Mary Les Dames lending her crown for the occasion—the poor puppet-king, Lambert Simnel, "well faced and princely shaped, and of no very evil nature," was crowned, with feasting and triumphing and mighty shouts and cries; and, the pageant ended, was borne "on tall men's shoulders," and doubtless accompanied by the FitzGerald brothers—Deputy and Chancellor at the time—his chief supporters, to the King's Castle. In the Priory, again, the rebel nobles, Kildare at their head, received the royal pardon under the Great Seal, the oath of allegiance taken by the Earl upon a Host consecrated by the English chaplain, lest even in this solemnity deception might be practised and the pledge rendered a nullity.

Scenes like this, with their vivid mediævalism, will recur no more in the quarter of the city where Christchurch, the King's Castle, and the City Hall recall or obscure the remembrance of the past. The Priory, with its vestments of purple and gold, is become the cathedral church of a faith which has

discarded purple and gold—and much else beside. St. Mary Les Dames is dispossessed, not only of her crown, but of her nuns, her convent, her chapel, and her worshippers ; and her parish, as far back as the sixteenth century, was incorporated with that of St. Werberga. But St. Werburgh's Church—even the St. Werburgh's of to-day, with its Corinthian columns and classic portico, has still one tradition to hand on : a tradition which links the chivalries of the past, chivalries armoured and helmed, lance in rest and banners flying, with the chivalries of new centuries of hope and aspiration and sacrifice, hope with no coloured visions, aspiration shorn of glamour, sacrifice without its ritual of palm and crown. For beneath the chancel of the church dedicated to the Anglian saint lies Edward FitzGerald ; while without, in a piece of burying-ground belonging to his family, by a coincidence as strange as that which placed Lord Castlereagh's monument near that of Grattan in Westminster, is the tomb of Charles Henry Sirr, from whose hand Lord Edward received the wound of which he died.

Ireland gives to her sons many gifts and great ; and, giving much, she requires from them also much. To the Geraldines of old she gave her loves, her hates, her blood, and her soul, receiving from them in return fair chapels, loyalty to her faith, devotion to her nationality. To Edward FitzGerald she gave her last gift—a dream ; and he, for her gift—greater love hath no man than this—laid down his life.

To place a death, as it were, as the headline of a life, and a grave as its frontispiece, might seem to reverse the natural order of things. But it is precisely the close of Lord Edward's career which has riveted upon him for a hundred years the gaze of his countrymen; and of him, as of another, it may be said that, in their eyes, no action of his life became him like the leaving it. It is, in fact, his title to a place in history.

At first sight Lord Edward's story presents only another monument of failure, vowed as he was to the service of a cause predestined to disaster, and, furthermore, dead before it had been granted to him to strike so much as a blow in its defence. But there is another reading to the record, and Fate is more just in her dealings than it sometimes appears. The gift of a cause is in itself no small one, and who shall determine whether, the character of the man being taken into account, the price exacted for it was disproportionately great?

It is, however, necessary to distinguish. If he was essentially a man with a cause, he was in no wise a fanatic. To some men it chances to possess their cause; to others to be possessed by it. To some, again, it is, so far as choice can be said to be a factor at all in the lives of men, the result of free election; while there are others to whom it might almost appear that no alternative has been offered, in whose case the attempt to elude the destiny prepared for them would be as vain as the endeavour to escape from some

doom which, pronounced upon them at birth, would be found, like Asrael, the Angel of Death in the Eastern legend, awaiting them, wherever they might fly.

It was to this last class that Edward FitzGerald belonged. Single-hearted and loyal as was his devotion to his country and his country's cause, it would be a misapprehension to confuse him with those comrades to whom the enfranchisement of their native land had been, from youth up, the one engrossing preoccupation of life, and who formed a group bound together by the closest ties of association, of class, and of interest.

Between Lord Edward and such men—men of the stamp of Wolfe Tone, his friend Russell, Emmet, McNevin, and the rest—cordial as were their relations during those later years in the course of which he was being drawn into the stream which was hurrying them on towards revolution, there was nevertheless a gulf which, bridged over as it was by a common aim and a common political interest, could not but leave them in a measure apart. To the patriots who were represented by Wolfe Tone, the one absorbing object removed, life would have held but little meaning. To Lord Edward, on the other hand, dedicated to that object as were the closing years of his brief manhood, it constituted, taking his life as a whole, but one aim out of many, a single thread, however shining and important, in the texture of a many-coloured woof. It was by the gradual elimination of rival, if not conflicting, interests that the ultimate domination of that which was to prove paramount

was assured. Lover, soldier, and patriot by turns, though it is in the last character alone that he has won a place in the remembrance of men, he brought almost equal enthusiasm to bear upon each pursuit. The enterprise in which he met his death was embraced in precisely the same gallant and irresponsible spirit of adventure, though combined with an invincible faith in the justice of his cause and a more serious purpose, which led him to imperil his life in a harebrained exploit during the American war or to traverse wildernesses in Canada hitherto unexplored.

It is true that it is not altogether an easy matter, oppressed by the sense of coming tragedy—a tragedy all the darker for the setting in which it is framed and from the very nature of the victim—to avoid allowing the shadow to fall backwards, and to cast its sombre tints over days troubled by no foreboding. But to do so is at once to lose the true atmosphere by which Lord Edward's life was pervaded, the bright and light-hearted daring which does not so much disregard danger as forget it, and makes its sacrifices with a spontaneous and reckless generosity which is almost unreflecting.

The mistake made by some of those whose admiration has been warmest has been of this nature. They have lost sight of the fact that amongst his most distinctive traits was the gaiety with which he faced the crises of life, great and small—a gaiety not incompatible, especially in those of his race, with

complete earnestness of purpose and passionate conviction; but incomprehensible to men of more ponderous temper, and possibly perplexing to those of more concentrated aims. Thus one writer is found adverting to the reverence inspired by the "solemn religious enthusiasm" belonging to his character; while a tone approaching deprecation is discernible in the explanation offered by Dr. Madden of the levity of his bearing at the very crisis of his fate, when not only life and liberty, but the entire issue of the enterprise of which he was leader, were at stake. It was his habit, says this apologist, to "*appear*" in his usual spirits, "*apparently*" light-hearted and easily amused; leaving it to be inferred from the italics that this gaiety was nothing but a mask, assumed at will. The theory is as widely at variance with the openness and simplicity of his nature as the assertions of a writer less favourably disposed towards him, who declared him to have artfully concealed his traitorous designs under the cover of his amiable manners and conduct, to have fascinated all his acquaintance into unqualified confidence, and to have sought to disguise his treason under the shield of the sublimest virtue and patriotism.

The one view is no less erroneous than the other. So far as it is possible to judge from the evidence that remains, what Lord Edward appeared to be, that he was. There are natures so complex that it is a difficult matter for even their contemporaries to hazard an opinion upon them, to adventure with

any assurance a conjecture as to the motives by which they are swayed, or to reconcile the man and his actions. But Lord Edward was not one of these. There was a singleness and a transparence about his character which forced upon men of the most opposite views the recognition of its main features, and amongst those best qualified to judge a rare consonance of opinion on the subject is found. On his gallantry and courage, his unblemished personal integrity, the sincerity of his ardour, his loyalty to the cause he had made his own, and the rare and sunny sweetness of his disposition, scarcely a doubt has been cast, even by those whose natural bias would have inclined them to take an unfavourable view of the leader of the movement in which he was engaged. Thus a political opponent, Henry MacDougall, who published in the year 1799 an account of the persons concerned in the "foul and sanguinary conspiracy" which had just been crushed, describes the young commander-in-chief of that foul conspiracy as "the delight and pride of those who knew him (this truly unfortunate circumstance of his life excepted), nor did there ever exist in the estimation of his friends a more noble youth, a braver gentleman"; and if it is true that the absence of bitterness amongst his Irish opponents may have been in part due to the glamour clinging to the figure of a Geraldine, those to whom no suspicion of national prejudice can attach are at one with his countrymen in this respect, and few are the stones which have been cast at his personal character.

In his capacity of political leader, however, it was another matter. Here he suffered to a marked degree from "*les défauts de ses qualités.*" A worse man would have made a better conspirator; and amongst all, save such as are pledged to allow no failing or deficiency to mar the portrait of their hero, there is as full a concurrence of opinion concerning his unfitness for the part he was set to play as with regard to the stainlessness of his honour. An authority vouched for by Madden as being better acquainted with him perhaps than any other of his associates, while bearing witness to the nobility of his character, his freedom from selfishness, meanness, or duplicity, and to his frankness and generosity, yet denied his capacity to conduct a revolution; Reinhard, French Minister to the Hanseatic towns, and a most friendly critic of the envoy who had been sent to open negotiations with his Government, while declaring himself ready to answer for the young man's sincerity with his head—a compliment, it may be observed, which Lord Edward would not have reciprocated—added that he was wholly unsuited to be leader of an enterprise or chief of a party; and, to quote an observer in a very different sphere, the informer Cox, while adding his testimony to Lord Edward's zeal, declared him, at the same time, unfit to command a sergeant's guard.

Such would seem to be the general verdict, contemporary and posthumous, and one borne out by the issue of the struggle in which he was engaged

and his failure to carry it to a successful conclusion. It was a verdict in which—since neither vanity nor arrogance are to be counted amongst his failings—he would himself in all probability have concurred. It was part of the gallantry of his disposition not to shrink from responsibility when it was thrust upon him. But it was his misfortune, and, according as it is regarded, the misfortune or the salvation of his country, that he was forced into a position which he was not competent to fill. The incongruity of the man and of the situation lends half its tragedy to the melancholy story.

CHAPTER II

1763—1781

Birth and Parentage—The Race of the FitzGerald—Features of their History—Lord Edward's Father and Mother—The Lennox Family—Childhood—The Duchess's Second Marriage—Boyhood in France—Commission in the Army—America.

LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD, fifth son and twelfth child of the twentieth Earl of Kildare and first Duke of Leinster, was born in London on October 15th, 1763.

The period during which his short life was to be passed—not thirty-five years in all—was a stormy one for Ireland. It was a time when the brooding resentment over the wrongs of centuries was gathering to a head, and sullen submission was being exchanged for fierce and passionate resistance; a time when injuries were inflicted in the name of religion; when tyranny was begetting violence, and oppression brutality; and when men, despairing of justice, were taking the vindication of their rights, as well as vengeance for their wrongs, into their own hands.

The story has been told often enough, now from one point of view, now from another; and it is not

intended to offer a further repetition of it here, except in so far as it may be necessary for the purposes of purely personal narrative.

Nor does it come within the compass of the present work to dwell otherwise than briefly upon the race from which the subject of it sprang. To give a consecutive account, however incomplete, of the Geraldines, of their dogged resistance to English rule, their forced submissions, and their renewed revolts, would be, it has been said, to epitomise the history of their entire nation—a nation whose annals, unconnected and episodical, “are like the scenes of a tragedy whose author had much imagination but no art”—and would occupy more space than can be afforded here.

It is with a certain “Dominus Otho” that the story begins; who, said to have been one of the Gherardini of Florence, passed into England by way of Normandy, and is found holding the rank of “honorary Baron” there in the reign of Edward the Confessor.

The descendants of Lord Otho did not remain for long rooted on the eastern side of St. George’s Channel. About the year 1169—before Strongbow had made good his footing in Ireland—two half-brothers, Maurice FitzGerald and Robert FitzStephen, crossed over, on the invitation of the King of Leinster, to help him against his foes, were invested by him with the lordship of Wexford, and so were established on Irish soil.¹

For a certain time it would seem that the tradition

¹ From this Maurice not only the Earls of Kildare, but their kinsmen the Earls of Desmond traced their descent.

of loyalty to the English throne was, though intermittently, observed by the Geraldines, their services rendered to Edward III. in his contest with the Bruce having been such as to be rewarded, in the year 1316, with the earldom of Kildare. But as years went by and the original connection with England grew more remote, they proved less and less submissive vassals of the Crown ; and though frequently holding high office in Ireland, they are constantly found suffering imprisonment or disgrace, for offences real or imputed, and accused, on one occasion at least, of "alliance, fosterage, and alterage with the King's Irish enemies," from whom, however, they continued to the end to be held distinct.

As early as the fourteenth century a General Assembly was called together at Kilkenny by Maurice, Earl of Kildare, and others, in opposition to the Parliament summoned to meet in Dublin, Earl Maurice suffering a subsequent term of imprisonment ; and under the Tudor kings the Earls of Kildare continued to display the same features of turbulence and insubordination ; open revolt alternating with perfunctory acts of submission which plainly bore the character of mere provisional concessions to necessity.

The history of Earl Gerald, in particular, dating from 1477, might almost be taken as typical of the relations existing between the English kings and their "cousins the Earls of Kildare." Invested with the office of Deputy, he persisted in retaining it, in spite of dismissal ; and, calling together a Parliament, was confirmed by it in his post. It was this same Gerald,

too, who headed the Irish nobles in their attempt to place Simnel upon the throne ; and when the enterprise had ended in disaster, and letters had been sent to England to demand a pardon, the nature of his submission is sufficiently indicated by the petition presented to the King's envoy by the citizens of Waterford, who, fearing lest vengeance might be wreaked upon them by the pardoned man in consequence of their refusal to join in the rebellion, entreated that they might be exempted from his jurisdiction as Deputy.

Two years later, summoned to meet the King, the great Irish nobles, Kildare at their head, repaired to Greenwich ; when Henry VII., telling them good-humouredly that "they would at last crown apes, should he be long absent," entertained them at a banquet at which the ex-King Simnel played the part of butler.

Again the scene shifts. Five years more and the banqueting-hall is replaced by the council-chamber ; where Earl Gerald, an attainted man, is undergoing his trial, one of the offences of which he stands accused relating to the burning of Cashel Cathedral, in consequence of a feud with the Archbishop, now present in person to prove the charge.

"By my troth," answered the Earl, "I would never have done it, but I thought the Bishop was in it."

The King laughed, pleased, it would seem, with the bold retort ; and when the Bishop of Meath, also present, exclaimed that all Ireland could not rule this

man, "Then he shall rule all Ireland," was Henry's rejoinder. He kept his word. Earl Gerald went home a free man, restored to all his honours, and Lord Deputy besides.

His successor, another Gerald, held hostage in England for his father's good faith, had been present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, apparently in favour with Henry VIII. Summoned from Ireland, however, later on, to answer charges preferred against him, he found a lodging in the Tower; and a report gaining currency that his execution was to follow, his son Thomas, not more than twenty years old—a young man, according to the chronicler, of considerable personal attraction and "not devoid of wit, were it not, as it fell out in the end, that a fool had the keeping thereof"—promptly resigned the Vice-deputyship, with which he had been entrusted in his father's absence; and, joined by two of his uncles, headed an insurrection.

The folly, if such it were, of Lord Thomas cost his family dear. Not only, if the explanation given of his death is to be credited, did his father die of grief in his prison and find a foreign grave in the Tower, but five of his uncles, after the thorough and wholesale fashion of the day, were included in the sentence passed upon him; and this though Holinshed declares that three of the number were known to have been opposed to his design. "But the enemies of their house," adds the historian, "incensed the King sore against it, persuading him that he should

never conquer Ireland so long as any Geraldines breathed in the country."

Six of the family, therefore, suffered together at Tyburn, affording signal contradiction to the proud old boast, to the effect that Death himself, in unassisted sovereignty and by means of no human instrument, would alone venture to lay hands upon a Geraldine :

Who killed Kildare ?
Who dared Kildare to kill ?
Death killed Kildare,
Who dares kill who he will.

But the work of extermination had, after all, been incomplete. Gerald FitzGerald, a young half-brother of the chief culprit, Lord Thomas, only twelve years old at the time, as well as a still younger child, escaped the general massacre, and lived to perpetuate the race, one more chapter having been added to the record of Ireland's wrongs.

The history of the Kildare branch of the FitzGeralds from this date becomes less noteworthy. The King's advisers had possibly been wise in their generation, and the old fighting spirit of the Geraldines in a measure broken by that sixfold execution at Tyburn. The family, indeed, had been left by it so popular that Robert Cowley, writing to the Secretary Cromwell in 1539, declared the English Pale, except the towns and very few of the "possessioners," to be "so affectionate to the Geraldines that they covet more to see a Geraldine to reign and triumph than to see

God come among them” ; but a long minority, passed by the young earl chiefly abroad, and followed by a reconciliation with King Edward VI. and an English marriage, paved the way for a more peaceful future ; and his successors, unlike their Desmond cousins, are for the most part found ranged upon the English side in the periodical rebellions by which Irish history was marked. Thus Gerald, fourteenth earl, fought for Elizabeth against Tyrone, and was pensioned by the English Queen ; George, called the Fairy Earl, by reason of his low stature, took part with the English against the Catholics, banded together under Owen Roe O'Neill ; while, though supporters of the Restoration, the FitzGeralds became partisans of William of Orange against the Stewart King and his Irish adherents.

When Lord Edward was born, however, more than two centuries after Thomas FitzGerald had paid, at Tyburn, the penalty of his rashness, the Geraldines, though times and methods had changed, were counted amongst the upholders of the rights of the people ; Lord Edward's own father, “loved Kildare”—so called by reason of the affection borne him by the nation—having come forward some years earlier to protest, though in more peaceful fashion than his ancestors, against the abuses incident to English rule.

Guarding himself against the imputation of interested motives by the explicit declaration that for himself and his friends he had nothing to solicit, that he sought neither place, employment, nor prefer-



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JAMES, EARL OF KILDARE (DUKE OF LEINSTER).

ment, he had addressed a memorial to the King touching the proceedings of that "greedy Churchman, Archbishop Stone." The remonstrance, though coldly received, was effectual, and some months later Stone's name was removed from the list of Privy Councillors.

That Lord Kildare did not suffer, even in the estimation of those in power, by the boldness of his protest would seem to be proved by the honours subsequently conferred upon him; while at home his popularity rose to such a height that it is recorded that he was an hour making his way through the crowd which filled the streets between Parliament House and his own, and a medal was struck to commemorate the presentation of his memorial.

The great popularity enjoyed by Lord Edward's father was probably due to other causes besides those of a political nature. He resided almost altogether in Ireland, spending his money either in Dublin—where he built himself Leinster House and exercised a princely hospitality—or on his estate at Carton; and the distinction of his manners was such, in their noble and attractive courtesy, that it was said that when in the presence of the Viceroys he gave the impression of being more Viceroy than they.

In the year 1747, two years previous to the presentation of his memorial to the King, he had married Lady Emilia Lennox, second daughter of the Duke of Richmond, a connection which exercised no little influence upon his son's subsequent career, bringing him, as it naturally did, into intimate relationship with

the great Whig families of England, and giving him a foothold on English life, both social and political.

Lady Emilia was one of a group of sisters and half-sisters, two of whom at least became, like herself, the mothers of notable men ; and among Lord Edward's first cousins were included Charles James Fox and the Napier brothers, heroes of the Peninsular War. Lady Sarah Lennox, mother of these last, and a younger sister of Lady Holland and the Duchess of Leinster, had been celebrated, in days when beauty was more of a power than is now the case, for her loveliness—"more beautiful than you can conceive," wrote Horace Walpole enthusiastically ; although he allowed on another occasion that, with all the glow of beauty peculiar to the family, she lacked features. It was this lady who had enjoyed the singular privilege of refusing the hand of a King—an opportunity of which she had availed herself in haste, to repent at leisure.

It would seem that beauty was hereditary in the Lennox family, for one of Lady Sarah's sons, left for dead upon the battlefield, was described by an officer by whom he was discovered in that condition as more beautiful than any man he had ever seen or dreamed of ; and in another of Horace Walpole's letters we are given a picture of a group at a ball, made up of the Duchess of Richmond and her two daughters, afterwards Duchess of Leinster and Lady Holland, herself the most beautiful of a beautiful trio ; while the Duke, her husband, showed his appreciation of his good fortune by remaining all night at his wife's side,

kissing her hand—an exhibition of domestic affection which must have been highly gratifying to the public sense of morality.

The Lennoxes were, in truth, an affectionate race, the ties of blood possessing in their case peculiar strength, and surviving to an uncommon degree the separating forces of life and its vicissitudes. It is necessary to bear this circumstance in mind in connection with Lord Edward's future life, for it is likely enough that to this cause, and to the fact of his possession of so large a home circle, with many friendships made ready to his hand, may be ascribed the absence of any indication of the formation of strong or intimate outside ties.

Of Lord Edward's childhood the details which have been handed down are few and meagre, nor are those which we possess of any special interest. Though he was born in London, if his marriage register is to be trusted, he must have been almost wholly brought up in Ireland so long as his father lived, and his earliest education was received at the hands of a tutor named Lynch.

When he was no more than ten years old, however, the Duke of Leinster died, at the comparatively early age of fifty-one; and in the following year, not more than ten months after his death, an event occurred which electrified society and must have had a considerable effect upon the future of the FitzGerald family. This was the marriage of the new-made widow, the mother of nineteen children, and already arrived at the

mature age of forty-two, to Mr. William Ogilvie, her son's Scotch tutor.

It was a proceeding which might well take the world by surprise, even when it was borne in mind that the Lennoxes had always testified a disposition to take the arrangement of their matrimonial affairs into their own hands. The Duchess's elder sister Caroline had, many years before, entered upon a clandestine marriage with the future Lord Holland, when he had been dismissed as ineligible by the authorities at home ; Lady Sarah, later on, had, as it has been observed, been disinterested enough, at least for the moment, to refuse a king ; and if the doubtful story is to be believed which makes her brother the Duke of Richmond, long after this period, and when he too must have left the age of sentiment far behind, a suitor for the hand of his nephew's fair little widow, it would seem that it was not to the feminine portion of the family alone that the tendency to romance belonged.

The first, half incredulous, intimation of the scandal is contained in a letter of Mrs. Delany's dated September, 1774. "The account of the Duchess of Leinster's marriage," she says, "with her son's tutor wants confirmation."

Later in the same month, however, the news had been corroborated. "The Dss. of Leinster," she says this time, "*is certainly* married to her son's tutor."

Later on still, details are given :

"I mentioned the Duchess of Leinster's marriage to her son's tutor, but I called him by a wrong name—his

name is Ogleby. People wonder at her marriage, as she is reckoned one of the proudest and most expensive women in the world, but perhaps she thought it incumbent (as Lady Brown said of her Grace) to 'marry and make an honest man of him.' I pity her poor children, and it is supposed that this wretched proceeding has made Lady Bellamont [Lady Emily FitzGerald, the Duchess's daughter] more ready to accept of that miserable match."

Thus Mrs. Delany, acting as spokeswoman for the world, scandalised by the madness of which the Duchess had been guilty. The letters of Lady Sarah Lennox, recently published, throw a light upon the spirit in which the marriage was accepted by those who were more intimately concerned in it, as well as upon the fashion in which the affair was carried through by a woman "whose good sense is enough known to make her conduct of some consequence."

It appears that it had been through what Lady Sarah terms the impertinence of the Duchess's eldest daughter, the Lady Bellamont mentioned by Mrs. Delany, that matters had been brought to a crisis; when her mother, "forced to take *un parti*," confessed, with some spirit, to those whom it chiefly concerned, that it was very possible she might marry Mr. Ogilvie; writing, further, when all was decided, to her brother in terms which, to a man of his affectionate disposition, were well calculated to disarm displeasure: "I am content," she said, "that you should call me a fool, and an old fool, that you should blame me and say you

did not think me capable of such a folly ; talk me over, say what you please, but remember that all I ask of you is your affection and tenderness.”¹

That she did not make her demand in vain, either in the case of the Duke or of others of her family, is plain from the sequel.

Of the man for whose sake she considered the world well lost comparatively little is known. He was of good Scotch blood, had been returned to the Irish Parliament by Mr. Conolly, brother-in-law to the Duchess, and bore the character of being an effective speaker, with a clear, articulate voice and a strong Scotch accent. With his accent he appears likewise to have brought from Scotland the shrewd common sense and substantial qualities supposed to belong to his nationality. It is certain, at all events, that neither the Duchess nor her “poor children” had reason to repent her imprudence ; while the account given of him, some five years later, by Lady Sarah Lennox, although not over-flattering, may serve in some measure as an explanation of the marriage.

“I have seen him,” she writes, on the return of the couple from abroad, “and think him a very good sort of man, most sincerely attached to her, which is all *my* business in the affair ; but she certainly did not marry him *pour l’amour de ses beaux yeux*, for he is very ugly and has a disagreeable manner, but as she says, very truly I believe, he had known her so many years he could not possibly not know *his mind*,

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, Vol. I., p. 240.



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EMILY COUNTESS OF KILDARE (DUCHESS OF LINSTAIR).

and his mind was to love her to adoration, and that's very captivating." ¹

In spite, however, of the remarkable tolerance displayed by the Lennox family, and in spite also of all that could be advanced in its favour, the marriage cannot have failed to be regarded by them in the light of a disaster ; and though there is no trace of any consequent estrangement between the Duchess and her relations, it is not unlikely that a few years' absence from England—a species of honourable banishment—may have been judged expedient before she should return to fill once more her place in society.

Whether it was for that reason or not, the FitzGeralds, shortly after the Duchess's marriage, quitted Ireland and took up their residence in France, occupying a house possessed by the Duke of Richmond at Aubigny as Duke of that name, and placed by him at the service of his sister and her family.

It was here that the remainder of Lord Edward's boyhood was passed, and it is possible that the warmth of his sentiments in after-years with regard to France—a bias not without its effect upon his career—may be due in part at least to the years spent by him on the banks of the Garonne. "You and I," he wrote to his mother from Paris when claiming her sympathy on behalf of the Revolution—"you and I always had a proper liking for the true French character."

Whether or not it was an altogether wise measure to educate abroad a boy intended to take his place

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 297.

in an English profession may be open to question ; but besides the reasons connected with the Duchess's marriage, economical arguments may also have been taken into consideration in determining her temporary retirement ; for with so large a family of young FitzGeralds—no less than nine sons and ten daughters had been born to the Duke, of whom many would still be on their mother's hands—to say nothing of two little Ogilvies shortly added to the tale, there was probably no superabundance of money available, even for purposes of education ; and Mr. Ogilvie, setting his shoulder to the wheel, and qualified, no doubt, by former experience for the task, seems to have kept Lord Edward's tuition entirely in his own hands.

It speaks well for the pacific dispositions of both teacher and pupil that the hazardous experiment was attended with marked success. Lord Edward's affection for his mother's husband was only indeed second to that passionate devotion to herself which, lasting through every phase of his after-life, presents one of his most attractive features ; and writing to Mr. Ogilvie when the period of close association was at an end, and when, emancipated from parental control, he had joined his regiment and entered upon his military career, the boy made due acknowledgment of his obligations with sincerity none the less evident because couched in the formal language of the day.

"Whatever [my sentiments] are," he wrote, after expressing his satisfaction at finding himself in accord with his step-father on the subject of their corre-

spondence—"whatever my sentiments are, as well as anything I have ever acquired, are mostly owing to your affection for me, both in forming my principles and helping my understanding; for which the only return I can make is my love for you, and that, I am sure, you are perfectly convinced of." Nor is there at any subsequent date the smallest trace that divergent opinions or other causes ever produced a diminution of the unusual cordiality of a difficult relationship.

Granted the inevitable isolation from all but family association of a boyhood passed in a French country neighbourhood, there was probably little wanting to make Lord Edward's a happy one. Brothers and sisters, older and younger, must have filled the house and found an ideal playground in the old Castle of Aubigny which stood near, if not adjoining, the more modern residence; and the companionship of his mother would have gone far to make up for the absence of the variety afforded by school life.

The system of home education, notwithstanding all that may be argued to its disadvantage, is not without its compensations, especially in the case of a nature standing in as little need as that of Lord Edward of the rougher discipline a school supplies; and to those early years passed under his mother's roof may be ascribed much of the abiding influence she exercised over him throughout his after-life, insufficient as it proved to avert the final catastrophe, as well as the clinging affection and singular confidence

which marked his relations with her to the end. He bore through life the stamp of a man who has loved his home.

Mr. Ogilvie appears to have been a practical man. His stepson had been destined from the first for the army, and his education was conducted throughout with a view to his future profession, to which he seems to have looked forward with eager anticipation. Even his amusements were brought to bear upon the art of war, and there is a letter extant to his mother in which he gives a description of the mimic fortifications with which, during her temporary absence from home, he had embellished the Duke of Richmond's orangery, together with an account of a "very pretty survey" which he had taken of the fields round the Garonne. The letter concludes with a half-apology for the boasting of which the writer had been guilty; "but you know," adds the boy cheerfully, "I have always rather a good opinion of what I do."

In the last century, however, less time was wasted than is the case now over the preliminaries of life, and prefaces were apt to be cut short. At sixteen young FitzGerald had concluded his education, except in so far as those studies were concerned which might be combined with the possession of a commission in the army, and he was already in England, attached in the first place to a militia regiment of which his uncle, the Duke, was Colonel, and was turning to practical use the experience gained in the orangery

fortifications and the Garonne survey. It would seem that under these new circumstances he succeeded in acquitting himself of his duties no less to his own satisfaction than formerly, as well as to that of his superior officer ; and judging from a letter to his mother, in which he gives a report of the proceedings of her "dear, sweet boy," it is to be inferred that the rude disciplinarian, Time, had not yet cured him of the habit of taking a favourable view of his own performances.

Keen, however, as was his enjoyment of his initiation into military duties, he was none the less eager to be done with what he no doubt regarded in the light of a mere rehearsal of the real business of life, and to cut short his apprenticeship ; nor is it to be wondered at that, at a time when actual experience of warfare was to be gained at the other side of the Atlantic, he should not have been disposed to linger over the stage represented by service in a militia regiment at home. Impatient to begin soldiering in earnest, he had scarcely been appointed, on the completion of his seventeenth year, to a lieutenancy in the 26th Regiment, before he is found fretting at a life of enforced inaction and moving heaven and earth to get himself dispatched abroad on active service.

Some necessary delay, however, took place before his wishes could be accomplished ; and in the meantime he was not backward in availing himself of such means of entertainment as were to be found within reach of his Irish quarters. As usual, he had nothing

but good to report, both of his superior officer and of the place in which he found himself. Everybody had shown him great civility, and he had in especial managed to get particular enjoyment out of a visit to Lord Shannon's, where he had met his relation Lady Inchiquin, arrayed, so he asserted, in the self-same *marron*-coloured gown she had been wearing when the FitzGerald departure from Ireland had taken place, though now altered in cut and made up into a jacket and petticoat. It would seem that Lord Edward's memory for clothes was good !

There had been another guest, besides poor Lady Inchiquin, at Lord Shannon's. For a considerable portion of Lord Edward's life it would not be unsafe to say that when he was not soldiering he was sure to be making love, and on this occasion he had made the acquaintance of a charming girl, the first of many, with whom, he assured the Duchess, he would, had he only had time, have fallen desperately in love ; owning himself, even in the absence of the necessary leisure, a little touched. In this case, too, no less than in respect to his military prowess, some trace of self-satisfaction is to be detected. As to what account of him Lady Inchiquin might give he confesses himself doubtful—one fancies his conscience accuses him of some ill-concealed ridicule of the antique *marron*-coloured gown ; but of Miss Sandford's good word—so much more important—he feels himself secure.

Yet, in spite of these distractions, and others, he was impatient to be gone, and, though in a less degree,

anxious upon the subject of promotion. He was already keenly interested in the details of his profession, and, young though he was, he took a serious view of his duties. Happy and hopeful as usual—" *le plus gai*" in his regiment, as he tells his mother, falling naturally into French after his long residence abroad—he had set himself to become a good soldier, and expected to succeed.

"I am very busy," he wrote, "and have a great deal to do with my company, which, as the captain does not mind it much, is not a very good one, and I have taken it into my head that I can make it better. You will think me very conceited, but I depend greatly upon Captain Giles's instructions. . . . I think by the time I have served a campaign or two with him I shall be a pretty good officer."

In the meantime he would have liked to have got a company of his own. He had already held for more than a month the position of lieutenant in his Majesty's army, was turned seventeen, and yet, so far as could be seen, there was no immediate prospect of his obtaining the promotion to which his brother, upon his behalf, ought to have had every right. Dilatory, however, as he considered the authorities in this respect, he was not so unwilling as he might otherwise have been to condone their neglect, owing to the apprehension lest promotion should interfere with his chance—a far more serious matter—of being speedily dispatched to the seat of war. One consideration, and one only, damped the exhilaration with

which he looked forward to the prospect of active service—the inevitable separation from his mother. Love for her was the only force that even for a moment came into competition with his spirit of adventure, and the two conflicting sentiments find expression in his letters.

“How happy I should be to see her!” he wrote, “yet how happy I shall be to sail!” And again, “Dear, dear mother,” he wrote from Youghall in answer to a letter the tenor of which it is easy to conjecture, since to the Duchess the impending separation can have had no compensations, “I cannot express how much your letter affected me. The only thing that could put me into spirits was the report that the transports were come into Cove.”

It was inevitable, however, that at seventeen and with a nature such as that of Lord Edward, the love of adventure should win the day. Even the delight of seeing his mother, he declared, would be enhanced by being preceded by an American campaign; and early in the year 1781 he exchanged into the 19th Regiment, then expecting shortly to be ordered abroad. Leaving England in March, he landed in the month of June at Charleston, to take his share, in strange contradiction to the latter part of his career, in the war which England was carrying on against the independence of her American colonies.

CHAPTER III

1781—1783

The American War—Opinions concerning it—Lord Edward at Charleston—Active Service—Dangerous Escapade—Wounded at Eutaw Springs—Tony—Early Popularity—St. Lucia—Back in Ireland.

THE end of the last century was a time when opinion moved rapidly. In the year 1798 the Duke of Norfolk, in proposing Mr. Fox's health at a great dinner of the Whig Club, mentioned in connection with his name that of another great man, Washington. "That man," he said, "established the liberties of his countrymen. I leave it to you, gentlemen, to make the application."

It is true that, in consequence of this speech, together with a toast which followed it, variously reported as "Our Sovereign—the People," or "The People—our Sovereign," the Duke was dismissed from the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire; but that such a speech should have been received with applause at an immense representative meeting is none the less a significant sign of the times.

In the very month that the Duke's speech was made, the cousin of Fox, Lord Edward FitzGerald,

lay dying of the wounds he had received in the cause of what he loyally believed to be the "liberties of his countrymen." Seventeen years earlier he had been wounded in another struggle, when fighting under the British flag in vindication of the rights of England over her colonies. At that later hour the comparison of the two objects for which his blood had been shed would seem to have been present with him ; and when a visitor, some military official of the Government with whom he had been acquainted in Charleston, reminded him of those old days, he replied—was it with a sense of a debt wiped out?—that it had been in a different cause that he had been wounded then ; since at that time he had been fighting against liberty, now for it.

But whatever may have been the case in after-life—and his was not a nature to be troubled by morbid remorse for a wrong ignorantly done—it is certain that no scruples as to the justice of the quarrel in which he was to be engaged were likely to disturb the conscience of the eighteen-year-old boy, or to interfere with his satisfaction in finding himself at last at the seat of war.

It was true that his cousin Charles James Fox was not only, with the rest of his party, bitterly opposed to the struggle, but that, with the irresponsibility of a statesman who considered himself at the time virtually and indefinitely excluded from all participation in practical politics, he was in the habit of using language which has been described as that of a passion-

ate partisan of the insurgents. "If America should be at our feet," he wrote after some British victory, "which God forbid!" His uncle the Duke of Richmond, too, had expressed his opinion—thus indicating his view of the men by whom the war was carried on—that Parliament in its present temper would be prepared to establish a despotism in England itself; and neither in society nor in the House did the Whig party make any secret of the goodwill they bore to the cause of the revolted colonies, some of the more extreme among them going so far as to make the reverses suffered by the British forces matter of open rejoicing.

But to hold a theoretical opinion is one thing, to allow it to influence practical action quite another, and it is to be questioned whether the views entertained by his party and accepted by himself as to the injustice of the war would have had a more deterrent effect upon the average country gentleman in the choice of the army as a profession for one son than would have been exercised by the prevailing scepticism of the eighteenth century upon his intention of educating the other with a view to the family living. The one was a matter of theory, the other of practice, and it is astonishing to what an extent it is possible to keep the two in all honesty apart.

Lord Edward's temperament, too, was essentially that of a soldier; to obey without question or hesitation was a soldier's duty; and especially when

the duty enjoined upon him lay in the direction of active service he was not likely to examine over-curiously into the abstract right and wrong of the principle upon which the war was based. On the contrary, when the differences of opinion prevailing in England on the subject were forced upon his attention, as, through his connection with the party in opposition, must often have been the case, he would dismiss them from his mind as wholly irrelevant to the more important question of personal duty ; reflecting, if he gave any thought at all to the matter, that whatever might have been the original rights of the quarrel, it was clearly the business of every soldier, since England had engaged in the conflict, to do his best that she should come out of it victorious.

That she was not likely to do so was, by this time, except to the eyes of a boy of eighteen, plain. The eventual issue of the struggle was practically decided. Ever since the beginning of 1781 reverses had persistently followed the British arms ; while, with the assistance of France, success was declaring itself more and more emphatically on the side of America. By October of the same year the war was terminated by the surrender of the British forces under the command of Lord Cornwallis, and the colonies were free.

At the time when Lord Edward landed with his regiment, four months earlier, no apprehension of so speedy a conclusion to hostilities was entertained.

Lord Rawdon, however, in command at Charleston, was so hard pressed that the officer in charge of the newly arrived regiments, instead of taking them to join the forces under Cornwallis, as had been originally intended, placed them at once at his disposal, with the result of some temporary successes to the British arms.

To Lord Edward personally the change of plan was attended with favourable consequences. Having distinguished himself before long by the display of unusual readiness and skill in covering a retreat on the part of his regiment, the performance made so advantageous an impression at headquarters that young FitzGerald was in consequence—other and more irrelevant circumstances being possibly taken into account—placed as *aide-de-camp* on Lord Rawdon's staff, a position which afforded him the opportunity of serving his apprenticeship to active service under the eye of a general well adapted to instruct him in the craft.

The fact that details of a personal nature are, at this period of his life, peculiarly scarce may account for the exaggerated importance which has been attached to a boyish escapade of which, brilliant and reckless though it may have been, many other lads with an equally adventurous spirit would have been capable. It is true that an interest not otherwise belonging to it may be lent to the incident by the later history of the hero; for the exploit was distinguished by precisely that rash and heedless

gallantry which continued to mark his conduct when it had become no longer a question of his personal safety alone, but of the success or failure of the enterprise of which he was the chosen leader.

It was when the English troops were engaged in effecting the relief of a fort invested by the American forces that the occurrence took place. A reconnoissance had been arranged ; and the Adjutant-General of Lord Rawdon's staff, before setting out on it, sent to desire Lord Rawdon's *aide-de-camp* to accompany the expedition. The *aide-de-camp*, however, was nowhere to be found ; and after a fruitless search the party was proceeding on its way without him, when, at a distance of two miles from the camp, the culprit was discovered, having been executing a strictly private reconnoissance of his own, and engaged, at the moment of the arrival upon the scene of the English patrolling party, in a hand-to-hand fight with two of the enemy's irregular horse. His insubordination had come near to putting a premature end to his experience of warfare. Saved, however, by the timely intervention of his comrades from the consequences of his foolhardiness, he submitted, with much show of penitence, to the severe reprimand administered by his commanding officer for the misdemeanour of which he had been guilty in absenting himself from the camp without permission ; and so conducted himself that, in spite of his delinquency, he succeeded in obtaining leave to accompany the present expedition. " It was impossible to refuse the fellow," confessed the Adjutant-General,

in telling the story, "whose frank, manly, and ingenuous manner would have won over even a greater tyrant than myself."

There were in after-days, one imagines, not a few persons who found it difficult to refuse to Lord Edward that which he desired to obtain !

On Lord Rawdon's return to England, his young *aide-de-camp* rejoined his regiment, and, fighting in the battle of Eutaw Springs, received the wound to which he alluded in his Newgate cell. It was also on the same battlefield that he gained a lifelong friend. Found lying there insensible by a negro, he was carried by the man to his own hut and was by him nursed back to life. The two were never afterwards parted, and throughout Lord Edward's whole subsequent history runs the thread of the doglike and devoted fidelity of "Tony" to his master.

There is indeed apparent at this period, as at every other, the special gift he possessed in so singular a degree—that, namely, of winning affection from all those with whom he was brought into contact. It was not only black Tony who felt his charm ; and a remarkable testimony to the position he held amongst his comrades is furnished by Sir John Doyle, the same officer who had been unable to find it in his heart to punish the boy for his breach of discipline by refusing him permission to accompany the reconnoitring party. Sir John, as Adjutant-General on Lord Rawdon's staff, had had special opportunities of forming an opinion of the General's *aide-de-camp*, and the evidence he bears

to his extraordinary popularity as well as to his gallantry is worth quoting.

"I never knew so lovable a person," he wrote, "and every man in the army, from the general to the drummer, would cheer the expression. His frank and open manner, his universal benevolence, his *gaité de cœur*, his valour almost chivalrous, and, above all, his unassuming tone, made him the idol of all who served with him. He had great animal spirits, which bore him up against all fatigue ; but his courage was entirely independent of those spirits—it was a valour *sui generis*."

The popularity thus described, while due no doubt in some measure to those winning qualities which are independent of training, may nevertheless be cited as additional proof that the system of home education which had been pursued in his case, and which had fostered the clinging affections and the gentleness which lasted through life, had been productive of none of the ill effects which sometimes make themselves apparent when a lad who has been thus brought up is thrown upon the world and forced to find his own level. The total absence of arrogance or self-assertiveness, upon which Doyle lays special stress, was at all times one of his marked features, and no doubt had its share in contributing to that influence over men of all classes which is essential to the leader of a party.

Lord Edward's experience of actual warfare, though exciting so long as it lasted, was not destined to be

prolonged. In the autumn came the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown; and he was sent some little time later—it does not appear at what exact date—to occupy a post upon the staff of General O'Hara at St. Lucia.

The work to be done on the West Indian island was chiefly that of erecting fortifications; and was probably found by the young soldier somewhat tame in comparison with the excitement of the American campaign. As usual, however, he cordially liked his new chief, who put him a little in mind of "dear Mr. Ogilvie," and who must have been possessed of attractions of his own; since, some thirteen years later, he broke the heart of Miss Berry, the friend of Horace Walpole, whose engagement to O'Hara is said to have constituted the one romance of her life. So constant, indeed, did she remain to her faithless lover, in spite of his repudiation, without explanation or excuse, of the relations between them, that, years afterwards, on receiving the sudden news of his death she fell down in a dead faint.

It was not only in the eyes of the woman who loved him and who described him as the most perfect specimen of a soldier and a courtier that O'Hara possessed singular merits. Lord Cornwallis also recorded his high opinion of the services he had rendered, and of his success in reconciling the Guards to the endurance of every species of hardship. He is therefore likely to have proved a chief after Lord Edward's own heart, both from a social and military

point of view ; and, granted the inevitable drawback of withdrawal from active service, everything at St. Lucia was much to the newcomer's liking, with the exception of "three blockheads who were pleased to call themselves engineers," and who supplied his one cause of legitimate discontent.

The mastery he possessed over the French language was the means of providing him with a greater amount of variety than fell to the lot of his brother-officers ; for he was sent, in consequence of it, in charge of prisoners and under a flag of truce, to the French quarters at Martinique, where he passed a very pleasant time, being as well received, or if possible better, than had that peace been concluded which was already a grave cause of anxiety and "frightened everybody."

By reason, doubtless, of its nationality, Martinique appears to have been a gayer resort than St. Lucia. The young envoy was at balls every night during his mission to the island, and found the women pretty and well dressed, besides being—he is careful to make the assertion on the authority of the French officers, but one may be justified in believing that their report had been corroborated by personal experience—"to use dear Robert's¹ words, 'vastly good-natured.'"

Lord Edward himself, like his brother, had probably little cause to complain of lack of good nature on the part of women ; nor had he as yet made the discovery that their kindness, in the case of a

¹ Lord Robert FitzGerald, his brother, younger by two years.

younger son possessed of restricted means, is liable to limitation.

In the comparative seclusion of St. Lucia, and with leisure to turn his mind to such matters, his thoughts again reverted to the subject of promotion. His views on the question had enlarged since he had last occupied himself with it in Ireland, and a company in the Guards was now the object of his ambition. A lieutenancy he would not so much as accept as a gift. He could not but consider it somewhat strange, to say the least of it, that, having been now nearly four years in the service—though he based no claim upon this circumstance—he had received no company; and being by this time on the way to complete his twentieth year, he naturally felt aggrieved at the neglect with which he had been treated. One detects the existence of a covert threat in the scheme unfolded to his mother of a plan for seeking in the East Indies, likely before long to become a stirring scene of action, the advancement in his profession which was so unaccountably withheld from him in other quarters.

It is clear that he considered that his relations had been remiss in pressing his claims upon the authorities at home. The Duke of Richmond had declined to interfere—a determination in which his nephew, viewing the matter dispassionately, could not but consider him mistaken; and her spoilt boy even seems to suspect the Duchess herself of supineness in the matter. His letters are nevertheless as full of affection as ever.

"What would I not give to be with you," he writes, only a month after that astute hint had been thrown out as to a lieutenant-colonelcy to be had in the East for the asking—"what would I not give to be with you, to comfort you, dearest mother! But I hope the peace will soon bring the long-wished-for time"—the peace, observe, the prospect of which "frightened everybody." "Till then my dearest mother will not expect it."

There is a curious touch of prudence—the prudence which recognises and gauges its own limits—in the allusion made to some wish apparently expressed by the Duke his brother that he should return to England on the attainment of his twenty-first year and set his money affairs in order. The question of the sale of an estate he had inherited appears to have been raised, and is the occasion of the frank opinion he expresses as to his own capacity for the management of financial business.

"I shall tell him," he writes to the Duchess, "that any arrangement he may make with your consent I shall always attend to. I own, if I were to sell entirely, I should feel afraid of myself; but, on the contrary, if I were to have so much a year for it, I think I should get on more prudently. . . . As to going home"—on this point he is decided—"I shall certainly not go home about it."

Though not with the object of making a settlement of his money matters, Lord Edward did in fact return to Ireland even before the date desired by his brother.

By the spring of the year 1783 he was at home again, having been absent nearly two years, and bringing back with him the experience of active military operations which he had been anxious to acquire, and which he expected to prove of so much service to him in years to come.

CHAPTER IV

1783—1786

Returned to Parliament—Life in Ireland—Tedium—The Condition of the Country—Westminster Election—Lord Edward's Family—Lord Edward in Love—At Woolwich—In the Channel Islands—Letters to his Mother.

IT was in the summer of 1783, a few months after his return to Ireland, that Lord Edward's political career may be said to have been formally inaugurated, by his finding himself a member of the new Parliament, returned to it by his brother the Duke as member for Athy.

In its ultimate consequences the event was of the last importance, turning, as in course of time it must necessarily have done, his attention to the condition of the country and its relations to England. But at the present moment it was another aspect of the affair by which he was principally affected.

Life in Ireland, in Parliament or out of it, presented a violent contrast to that which he had lately led. Lord Edward frankly confessed that he found the tedium of that life intolerable. It was no wonder. It does not appear that he formed any close friendships, at least as yet, among the men who were to



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be his associates at a later date ; nor, though he was punctual in his attendance at the House, and from the first consistent in his adherence to the popular side, was he likely at twenty-one to find politics sufficiently engrossing to compensate for the absence of the excitement of the last two years. It is more probable that he regarded them chiefly in the light of an interruption to the serious business of life, represented by the art of killing, and, in case of necessity, being killed, after the most approved method of military science.

Possibly, as he felt himself insensibly drawn into the current of the interests of those by whom he was surrounded, the distaste with which he regarded his new environment may have been modified ; but at the outset his sentiments were plainly enough expressed.

“ I have made fifty attempts to write to you,” he tells his mother, just then in England, in a letter dated from his brother’s house, “ but have as often failed, from want of subject. Really a man must be a clever fellow who, after being a week at Carton and seeing nobody but Mr. and Mrs. B——, can write a letter. If you insist on letters, I must write you an account of my American campaigns over again, as that is the only thing I remember. I am just now interrupted by the horrid parson, and he can find nothing to do but to sit at my elbow.”

For once, it is clear, Lord Edward’s sweet temper was ruffled. The only thing which he thoroughly

approved, as we find from a letter a month later, was of his mother's intention of giving up going abroad in order to bear him company in Ireland. Her presence, he told her, was the only thing that could make him happy there. When she was absent he found home life very insipid.

Yet the situation in Ireland, in Parliament and out of it, was one which might have been expected to vary the monotony of existence, and to impart to it some flavour of excitement, especially to one who might look to have a hand in the direction of affairs.

During the previous year Parliamentary independence had been won. But to be effective, as events too clearly proved, it should have been accompanied by reform. A situation under which the members of the Upper House returned, for their pocket boroughs, a majority of those of the Lower, was a travesty of Parliamentary government. Opinions, however, differed as to the next step to be taken. Within the walls of the House itself party spirit was running so high that only by the interposition of Parliament was a duel between Flood and Grattan, the two great popular leaders, averted. The country at large was in a condition of ferment and agitation, alike constitutional and the reverse ; and in some parts was so given over to lawlessness that, to cite one instance alone, it had been possible for the notorious George Robert FitzGerald—a connection by marriage of the Duke of Leinster's—to keep his father, with whom he had had

a disagreement, in confinement for the term of five months, and, with cannon mounted round the house where he was imprisoned, to defy for that period the action of the authorities. The Volunteer movement, too, was at its height, losing daily more and more of its original character, to assume an attitude of hostile menace towards the Government, while Dublin itself was in so turbulent a condition that outrages in the streets were of daily occurrence.

All this, one would imagine, must have offered a variation to the routine of daily life during the first year of Lord Edward's initiation into Parliamentary affairs. Nor were other incidents wanting to break the monotony which might have attached to it—incidents such as that which occurred in November, 1783, when that strange and picturesque personage, Lord Bristol, Bishop of Derry—one of the most anomalous figures of the day—drove into Dublin to attend the Volunteer Convention in royal state, in a carriage drawn by six horses with purple trappings, and escorted by a troop of volunteer dragoons under the command of that very FitzGerald, his nephew, who had successfully held the sheriff's officers at bay. Dressed in purple, with diamond ornaments, the Bishop halted at the door of Parliament House, saluting with royal dignity those members—Lord Edward, perhaps, amongst them—who, startled by the blast of trumpets which had heralded his approach, had crowded to the door to ascertain the cause of the unusual tumult.

Of the impression made upon the new member by

such events as these our means of forming a conjecture are scanty. That his sympathies were not, so far, engaged on the side represented by the more recent developments of the Volunteer movement may be inferred from a passage in a letter of December, 1783, in which Horace Walpole informs his correspondent that "Lord Edward FitzGerald told me last night that he fears the Volunteers are very serious, *sans compter* the spirits which the late revolution here may give them." He never took part at this time in the debates in the House, and there is a gap in his correspondence with his mother, by which light might have been thrown on the subject, explained by the fact that during the next two years his home was for the most part made, though not without intervals spent in London or Dublin, with the Duchess and Mr. Ogilvie at their Irish residence, Frescati.

One of his visits to London, occurring during the year which succeeded his return to Ireland, was spent after a fashion which must have afforded a welcome relief to the monotony of which he complained. In the General Election of 1784, when the contest in Westminster was attracting more attention than any other throughout the kingdom, Lord Edward was one of those engaged in canvassing the constituency on behalf of his cousin Charles James Fox—a circumstance mentioned by Lord Holland as having, coupled with certain proceedings of his nephew's in the Irish House of Commons, caused considerable annoyance to the Duke of Richmond, at the time

a supporter of the Tory party. It is further hinted by the same authority that the Duke gave practical proof of this annoyance at a later date, in matters connected with the professional advancement of the culprit.

Whether or not this was the case, the excitement supplied by the fight must have afforded Lord Edward ample compensation for any displeasure testified by his uncle then or thereafter. Court and Government were united in the strength of their opposition to Fox's candidature; while among the powerful adherents who threw the weight of their personal influence into the balance in favour of the Whigs were the Prince of Wales and the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire.

It was a hard struggle, and when the popular candidate was returned, though not at the head of the poll, his success was celebrated by a procession to Devonshire House, graced by the ostrich feathers of the Heir-apparent, by *fêtes* at Carlton House itself, and by a dinner at Mrs. Crewe's, in which the royal supporter appeared wearing the Whig colours. At all these festivities in honour of the victory he had helped to win, Lord Edward doubtless assisted, before returning reluctantly to the routine of ordinary life at Dublin.

If, however, existence there was not without its drawbacks, there was another side to it; and as he grew more habituated to life under its new conditions, and as the reaction from the exhilaration afforded by

the campaigning experiences of the last two years became less oppressive, he must have recognised the fact that Ireland, especially to a man of his social temperament, offered advantages of its own.

Whatever society was to be had, in Dublin or elsewhere, was naturally open to him; and many members of his own family were settled, from one cause or another, within reach. The Duke of Leinster lived principally in his own country, thus setting an example to less patriotic landlords—"a most amiable private gentleman, and a good and quiet man," as a contemporary describes him, "spending his rents in Ireland, and justly idolised." Lord Edward's aunt, too, Lady Louisa, who, herself childless, bore her nephew an affection only less than that of his mother, had married Mr. Conolly, of Castletown, near Dublin, said to be the wealthiest landed proprietor in the country; and another of the Lennox sisterhood, Lady Sarah—now married, for the second time, to a Napier—also made her home in Ireland, her rare beauty so little impaired by the lapse of years that the Prince of Wales, meeting in 1781 the woman who, as he said, pointing to Windsor Castle, "was to have been there," expressed his approval of his father's taste, and his conviction that, even in those distant days, she could not have been more fair.

It has already been observed that in Lord Edward's family the ties of blood possessed peculiar force; and the opportunities of constant intercourse with those

he loved must have served to some extent to reconcile him to his present surroundings. His stepfather, indeed, went so far as to assert that this particular period constituted the happiest time in the lives of any of the three—himself, his stepson, and his wife—who loved each other so well. Whether or not Lord Edward would have altogether endorsed the statement, it is not unlikely that it was approximately true. He was twenty-one, launched in a profession of which he was proud, and in which he had already achieved a certain amount of distinction. He was living under the same roof as a mother he adored. And lastly, and most important of all, he was in the full swing of his first serious love affair; and, threatened with disappointment though his hopes might be, still, "*les beaux jours quand j'étais si malheureux*" are not unfrequently the best worth having of a man's life.

The tedium of existence at home had left but one thing to be done. It was an expedient for which Lord Edward's nature fortunately offered special facilities. He had accordingly resorted to it without loss of time. He fell in love.

The heroine of this preliminary romance was Lady Catherine Meade, daughter of Lord Clanwilliam, and afterwards married to Lord Powerscourt. Of Lady Catherine herself little is known, and that little chiefly from the letters of her lover, written at a time when, in the beginning of the year 1786, three years after his return to Ireland, he was parted from his mother, having placed himself at Woolwich with a determina-

tion there to pursue a regular course of study. A military career was that to which he still looked forward, and it is plain that he regarded his Parliamentary duties in the light of a more or less irrelevant interlude.

It does not appear what share his mother had in deciding him upon his present step ; but it was probably not a small one. Lord Edward, it is true, was his own master. He had reached an age which, a hundred years ago, represented a stage far more advanced than at present, when, at twenty-three, a man is often only just leaving college, and setting himself for the first time to make his reckoning with the facts and possibilities of life and to decide upon his future profession. He had already seen active service, and had occupied for more than two years the position of a member of Parliament. In financial matters he was independent of either profession or family ; his income, amounting to something like eight hundred a year, though a small enough patrimony for a duke's son, and wholly inadequate to incline Lord Clanwilliam to entrust him with the future of his daughter, being amply sufficient to supply his wants so long as he remained unmarried.

Yet in spite of all this there was about him a singular and attractive absence of that assertive spirit of independence or that desire to emancipate himself from home influence or control which is so common a feature of the age which he had reached. "As humble as a child"—if humility were indeed a quality of

childhood, which may be questioned—was part of a description given of him at a much later date, when he occupied the post of the recognised chief of the national party in Ireland ; and at every stage of his career it would seem to have been a true one.

The deference he uniformly showed to his mother's opinions, so long as such deference did not imply a surrender of principle, should be borne in mind, since it accentuates the strength of the convictions which afterwards forced him into an attitude of opposition, not only to the views of the Duchess, but of most of those he held dear.

To his mother he continued for the present to refer all his projects, all his schemes ; and it is clear that he would not at this time have entered upon any plan of life which should not have received the sanction of her approval.

A curious proof of the strength of the influence she retained is furnished by a letter in which his dread is expressed of a corresponding power, should it be exerted by Lady Clanwilliam over her daughter in a direction adverse to his hopes.

“Suppose you were here,” he writes, “and to say to me, ‘If you ever think of that girl, I will never forgive you,’ what should I do? even I, who dote on Kate !”

Whether her son's attachment to Lady Catherine had the Duchess's approval ; or whether, which is more probable, perceiving it to be hopeless, it was by her advice that Lord Edward repaired to England—a plan

which possessed the double advantage of affording him an opportunity of pursuing his military studies and of being calculated to put an early end to an affair which she probably regarded in no very serious light—can only be matter of conjecture. What is certain is that, if the obliteration of Lady Catherine's image had been her object, her expectations were fully justified by the event.

At first, indeed, it might have seemed likely to prove otherwise. Lord Edward was genuinely and honestly in love. It was not his custom to suffer in silence, and his letters to his mother reflect faithfully, and with a charming and naïve sincerity, the fluctuations to which he was subject, and the varying phases of his mind, ranging from heart-broken discouragement to complete recovery.

Mr. Ogilvie was at first also in London, having probably accompanied his stepson to England; and the two spent some time together before Lord Edward carried into effect his intention of entering himself at Woolwich.

It was spring and London at its gayest. Lord Edward was full of engagements, dining out every day and dancing all night. But all this, he was careful to explain, did not afford him the slightest enjoyment; nothing now interested him in what he "used to call a life of pleasure"; so little was his attention engaged in what he was doing that he was constantly late for dinner wherever he dined. In Mr. Ogilvie's society alone he found real satisfaction.

He complained indeed that his step-father was not at all soft or tender; but "I make him talk of Kate, whether he will or not"—poor Mr. Ogilvie!—"and indeed of you all. I find, now I am away, I like you all better than I thought I did." And then once more he recurs to his own grievances. "I never think of going to anything pleasant myself; I am led to it by somebody. I depend entirely upon other people, and then insensibly *je m'amuse*."

There were few situations from which, whether sensibly or not, Lord Edward did not succeed in extracting some amusement, but at the present moment he really seems to have been too much dejected to find it in London society; at any rate, he presently repaired to Woolwich, to try whether work might be more to his taste than what, at twenty-three, he had ceased to call pleasure.

At first little improvement is perceptible in his condition; and from the tenor of his letters one might almost be led to suspect that, if the Duchess had had a hand in sending him away, he was bent upon demonstrating to her the fruitlessness of the experiment. He is, he tells her, very busy—it is, in fact, his only resource, for he has no pleasure in anything. He acts upon her advice and tries to drive away care, but without success. And then comes the first confession of some symptoms of amendment. "My natural good spirits, however, and the hopes of some change, keep me up a little." And he hopes the Duchess will make him as happy

as she can by giving accounts in her letters—it is easy to guess of what.

“I need not say,” he goes on, “I hope you are kind to pretty dear Kate; I am sure you are. I want you to like her almost as much as I do—it is a feeling I always have with people I love excessively. Did you not feel to love her very much, and wish for me, when you saw her look pretty at the Cottage?”

By July Mr. Ogilvie had returned to Ireland; and, unable to depend any longer upon his stepfather to send home reports of his proceedings, he was forced to take to more regular letter-writing on his own account. “By the way, I wish Tony could write,” he says in parenthesis; though whether the faithful Tony’s reports of his master’s condition would have reconciled the Duchess to silence on his own part may well be questioned. He was working very hard—a change, no doubt, after two years in Dublin with nothing to do except to give his vote when required—but confessed candidly that, if he had *le cœur content*, a life of idleness and indolence was the one which suited him best. He evidently entertained some apprehensions as to the effect of her husband’s masculine common sense upon his mother and her letters. She was not to let Ogilvie spoil her by telling her she “would be the ruin of that boy.” If the Duchess minded her husband and did not go on writing pleasant letters, always saying something about Kate, he would not answer her—would not

indeed write at all. Here, however, another confession is made—he was not in such bad spirits as in London. “I have not time hardly. In my evening’s walk, however, I am as bad as ever.” The nature of that walk he had explained in a letter to his brother; “but upon my honour,” he adds, “I sometimes think of *you* in it”—which assurance is perhaps all that can be looked for by a mother whose son is in love. “I wish, my dear mother,” he goes on, suddenly throwing Woolwich and military advancement and all else to the winds—“I wish you would *insist* on my coming to you.”

The Duchess did not “insist” upon it; and in the summer the Duke of Richmond, making an official survey of the Channel Islands, took his nephew with him.

Further amendment in the state of Lord Edward’s spirits was duly reported to his mother from St. Hélier.

“I have been in much better spirits,” he confesses frankly, “everything being new. . . . I shall get a great deal of knowledge of a part of my profession in this tour; for the Duke goes about looking at all the strong places, and I have an opportunity of hearing him and Colonel Moncrieffe talk the matter all over.”

He was still, however, unfeignedly anxious to get home, though he would not carry his wishes into effect against the Duchess’s judgment; and she, no doubt fortified by Mr. Ogilvie’s representations, was proof against his importunities.

“Don’t you think I might come home after this tour?” he asks persuasively. “I begin now, my dearest mother, to wish much to see you ; besides, I think that, after all this, I could do a great deal of good at Black Rock, as my mind has really taken a turn for business. Thinking of Kate disturbs me more than seeing her would do. I do really love her more, if possible, than when I left you. . . . I must come home ; it is the only chance I have against *la dragonne*” (Lady Clanwilliam).

Besides, he proceeds to demonstrate, making use of a line of argument which might be expected to appeal, more strongly than his desire to circumvent Lady Clanwilliam, to the authorities at home, he never worked so well as with Ogilvie ; and his mathematics, especially necessary in his profession, would gain more by his stepfather’s instructions than by those of any teacher on the other side of the Channel. Ogilvie, of course, he adds, with a touch of petulance, would be against his coming ; “but no matter, you will be glad to have me on any terms, and I am never so happy as when with you, dearest mother.”

It says much for the Duchess’s strength of mind that she was unconvinced by this fond flattery. She evidently refused to listen to the voice of the charmer, charmed he never so wisely, for in August Lord Edward was back again in England, detained at Goodwood, the Duke of Richmond’s house, by a sprained ancle. “I do think, what with legs and

other things," he told his mother, "I am the most unlucky dog that ever lived."

He set to work again, nevertheless, this time at mechanics, and appears to have put the idea of a present return to Ireland out of his head. He had, indeed, started another scheme, concerning which he was, as usual, anxious to have his mother's opinion. He was, like some other people, very wise on paper.

Goodwood was full of temptations to idleness; Stoke, another uncle's house, even more alluring, and "*je suis foible*." What would the Duchess think of his going for four months, till the meeting of Parliament in January, to study at a Scotch university, where he would be able to give his whole mind to work? It was a scheme which offered many advantages. There were, however, drawbacks to the plan, of which he possibly became more conscious so soon as he had reduced it to black and white. It was three months since he had seen his mother; four more would be "a great while." If she decided upon passing the interval before the meeting of Parliament abroad—suddenly the Scotch university fades out of sight as if it had never existed—he was determined to go also and remain with her till recalled by his Parliamentary duties.

If he had been three months absent from his mother, there was some one else from whom he had likewise been absent for the like period, and that was Lady Catherine Meade; and though he was careful to protest that his sentiments with regard to her had remained

unalterably the same, a rival attraction, towards the end of August, had begun to make itself felt. He was right when, in planning that visit to Scotland, he had anticipated distractions, should he remain in his present surroundings. In these matters, as well as in those relating to money, he placed a just estimate upon his powers of resisting temptation, whether to extravagance or to idleness. Besides, "*si on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a*"; and it was not likely that a man of Lord Edward's temperament should find himself for long together without an object for his affections from which he was not separated by the breadth of the Irish Channel.

That the possibility of infidelity had begun to make itself felt was apparent, not only in his protestations of changelessness, but also in the credit he took to himself for the fact that, though he had been staying at Stoke, the house of his uncle Lord George Lennox, and had there enjoyed opportunities of intercourse with Lord George's three daughters, he still remained faithful.

"Though I have been here ever since the Duke went," he writes, not without some pride, "I am as constant as ever, and go on doting upon her; this is, I think, the greatest proof I have given yet. Being here has put me in much better spirits, they are so delightful."

And most delightful of all was Georgina Lennox, the youngest of the sisters, then about twenty-one. Giving a description of this niece some six years earlier,

Lady Sarah Napier had mentioned that she was considered to be very like herself, which would seem to imply that she was gifted with her full share of the family beauty ; and with the wit, the power of satire, and the good-nature with which she was said, even at fifteen, to be endowed, she must have been a dangerous rival to the absent Lady Catherine. A fortnight later than the last letter quoted another was written, which contained a clear foreshadowing of the end, though still accompanied by the protestation of unalterable attachment.

“I love her more than anything yet, though I have seen a great deal of Georgina. I own fairly I am not in such bad spirits as I was, particularly when I am with Georgina, whom I certainly love better than any of her sisters. However, I can safely say I have not been *infidelle* [*sic*] to Kate—whenever I thought of her, which I do very often, though not so constantly as usual ; this entirely between you and me. . . . I love nothing in comparison with you, my dearest mother, after all.”

It is a precarious and intermittent supremacy at most that mothers enjoy, but they must make the best of it. The Duchess had, in fact, only exchanged one rival for another ; but Lady Catherine Meade had passed for ever out of her young lover’s life, and her place in it knew her no more.

CHAPTER V

1786—1788

Lord Edward and His Mother—Increasing Interest in Politics—The Duke of Rutland Viceroy—Lord Edward's Position in Parliament and Outside It—Visit to Spain—General O'Hara.

IF Lord Edward was once more in love, he said less about it than when Lady Catherine had been the heroine of his boyish romance. It does not appear that, even to his mother, his constant confidant, he mentioned, during the next few months, the passion which had taken hold of him. His silence may possibly have been due to the fact that this second affair was a more serious matter than the first ; or, again, he may still have been young enough to be shamefaced over his own inconstancy. At any rate, his reticence marks a new stage in his development.

One fancies, too, that other changes are perceptible ; that his laughter is a trifle less frequent and whole-hearted ; that he has become a little older, a little wiser, than when "pretty dear Kate" was his constant theme. Perhaps something of the first freshness, so gay and so young as to be almost childish, is gone. And if his passionate love for his mother had lost

nothing of its fervour—the devoted affection which, in its clinging tenderness and open expression, was more like that of a daughter than a son—yet even upon this it would seem that a change had passed ; that it had become graver and deeper than before—an affection which was shadowed by that foreboding apprehensiveness of possible loss which belongs to the first realisation of the transitoriness of all things human.

There had, however, been nothing to mar the gladness of their meeting after the months which, to one at least of the two, had seemed so long. The Duchess had passed through England on her way abroad in the autumn of the year which had witnessed the death of her boy's first fancy ; and mother and son had met once more at her brother's house, where Lord Edward had eagerly awaited her.

“Do not stay too long at Oxford,” he wrote when she was already on her way ; “for if you do, I shall die with impatience before you arrive. I can hardly write, I am so happy.”

It was some months before the two made up their minds to separate again. The Scotch scheme, notwithstanding all it had had to recommend it, had evidently died at birth, for there is no further mention of any such plan ; and on the Duchess's departure Lord Edward accompanied her abroad, remaining with her at Nice until recalled to Ireland by the opening of Parliament.

Dublin seems to have had no more attraction for

him, on his return thither, than formerly ; and, especially in the absence of his mother, had little to recommend it. He missed her at every turn, and told her so in language which must have been dear to the Duchess's heart. To visit her own home at Frescati and to find her absent, to go to bed in the familiar house without wishing her good-night, to come down in the morning and not to see her, to look at her flowers without having her to lean upon him—all this was "very bad indeed." "You are," he tells her in another letter, with one of those touches of melancholy that are new—"you are, after all, what I love best in the world. I always return to you, and find it is the only love I do not deceive myself in. . . . In thinking over with myself what misfortunes I *could* bear, I found there was one I *could not* ;—but God bless you !"

There is, alas ! no making terms with Fate ; and whatever has to be borne can be borne. But the misfortune which Lord Edward felt would have been intolerable was spared him. His mother outlived him, to mourn his loss.

Another significant change is apparent about this time. His interest, his personal concern, so to speak, in politics was evidently deepening to a marked degree. Yet here, too, the aspect of affairs was discouraging.

In the country at large the Whiteboy disturbances had spread to an alarming extent, carrying with them every species of crime and outrage ; enlisting on the side of Government some of those who had hitherto remained either in opposition or had preserved a

neutral attitude, and uniting together all parties in the effort to check the growing disaffection.

From this cause and from others the political situation, in contrast to the agrarian, was one of exceptional tranquillity. The Viceroyalty of the young Duke of Rutland—not ten years older than Lord Edward himself—had been popular. Although already impoverished by losses at play, his hospitalities were conducted on a scale of magnificence surpassing in brilliancy even that of the court he represented, and after a gayer fashion than was the case at Carlton House, of the “decorous indecorum” of which, together with the “dull regularity of its irregularities,” the Duc de Chartres, on his first visit to England, is reported to have complained. The young Duke was honourable and generous, his wife beautiful—they were, indeed, said to be the handsomest couple in Ireland—and between them they had worked a revolution in Irish society, not altogether for the better, and which, with the sudden relaxation of manners that accompanied it, was far from pleasing to the stricter censors of morality, “accustomed,” says a contemporary historian, “to the almost undeviating decorum of the Irish females.”

But whatever might be the effect, upon a society hitherto distinguished for its purity, of the absence of dignity and restraint which marked the Viceregal entertainments, the spirit of good fellowship engendered by conviviality is not without its use in smoothing away political rancour and bitterness; and the Duke's

splendid hospitalities had drawn within the circle of his influence many who might otherwise have stood apart from it. The success of the system was apparent in Parliament. "It would not have been supposed possible, even three years ago," wrote the Chief Secretary, Orde, "to have attained almost unanimity in the House of Commons to pass a Bill of Coercion upon the groundwork of the English Riot Act."

What Lord Edward could do to lessen the unanimity upon which the Chief Secretary's congratulations were based had been done; and throughout the session he steadily adhered to the small minority which opposed the Bill, together with other like measures. His tone, however, with regard to the political outlook was in private one of discouragement, though not of that discouragement which loses heart to continue the fight.

"When one has any great object to carry," he wrote, "one must expect disappointments, and not be diverted from one's object by them, or even appear to mind them. I therefore say to everybody that I think we are going on well. The truth is," he adds, however, candidly, "the people one has to do with are a bad set. I mean the whole, for really I believe those we act with are the best."

It was in the course of this year that he made a speech, upon a motion of Grattan's dealing with the question of tithes, which helps to define both the extent of his present sympathy with the popular agitation and perhaps its limitations. His attitude was still that of a man not inclined to yield to violence



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the concessions demanded by justice. Tithes, he said, having been a grievance for thirty years, it became the wisdom of the house to enquire into them. While the people were quiet, no enquiry was made; while they were outrageous, no enquiry perhaps ought to be made; but certainly it was not beneath the dignity of the House to say that an enquiry should be made when the people returned to peace and quietness again. He had to be taught by the lessons of experience that it was by the methods he then deprecated, and by them alone, that justice could be obtained.

His position was probably at this time a lonely one. He was drifting away by insensible degrees, if not in affection yet in opinions and sympathies, from those who had heretofore been his natural associates; while he had not, so far, filled their vacant place. What were his personal relations with the recognised Parliamentary leaders on the popular side, with Flood and Grattan and their friends, or whether he had any personal relations with them at all beyond those necessarily existing between members of the same party, we have no means of ascertaining; and it is impossible to avoid contrasting his life at this period, as it is known to us, with that of the group of men with whom he was presently to cast in his lot—men closely allied with each other in aims and interests, and in habits of daily intercourse and constant interchange of thought.

With regard to his own family, it is true that nothing is more remarkable than the absence of any

trace of alienation on their part in consequence of his identification with a movement with which the sympathy of most of them must have been small. But even affection sometimes leaves a man lonely ; and in point of opinion their paths were rapidly diverging. Thus the Duke of Leinster, essentially a moderate man, though commonly taking the popular side in Parliament and remaining true to the national cause at the time of the Union, forfeited much of his influence and popularity about this time by a disposition to content himself with the concessions made by the English Government, and to adhere to a waiting policy with regard to remaining grievances. He can, therefore, have had no sympathy with the extreme party to which Lord Edward was to be allied ; while the favourite brother of the latter, Henry—of whom he once said, “Harry is perfect,” and whose letter to Lord Camden, written under the influence of uncontrollable excitement after Lord Edward’s death, speaks of the uncommon affection which had subsisted between the two from childhood—was presently to marry an heiress, and, residing in his villa on the Thames, to play most often the part of an absentee. The husband of his aunt, Lady Louisa Conolly, whose singular affection for her nephew has already been noticed, had lately, temporarily at least, deserted the national side and given his support to Government, behaving, in Lord Edward’s eyes, shabbily in the matter ; while Lady Louisa herself would seem to have been a weak though affectionate woman ; and,

judging from her reference, when her nephew lay dying in prison, to "dear Lord Castlereagh's distress," was too easily swayed by those with whom she was brought into contact to have much fellow-feeling at the service of such as were acting in opposition to the social and class traditions which belonged to her position.

All things considered, the end of the session must have been welcome to Lord Edward. Always ready for change, he went abroad so soon as he was released from his Parliamentary duties, and was probably still absent from Ireland when, in the autumn of 1787, to quote Sir Jonah Barrington, "the Duke of Rutland's incessant conviviality deprived the British peerage of an honourable, generous, and high-minded nobleman, and Ireland of a Viceroy whose Government did nothing, and whose court did worse than nothing, for the Irish people."

Lord Edward, however, had left politics behind for the present, and had set himself—no difficult task—to enjoy his holiday. His plans included a visit to Gibraltar and a journey through Spain and Portugal. It was a curious coincidence that at the first place he fell in with the man, Charles Henry Sirr, from whom he was to receive, eleven years later, the wound the consequences of which proved fatal, and who has left upon record an opponent's testimony to the high character for honour borne by Lord Edward.

The stay of the latter at Gibraltar was a pleasant one. His old chief, General O'Hara, was attached to the staff at the Rock, finding it perhaps convenient

—if one is to judge of his circumstances by a statement of Lord Cornwallis's to the effect that "poor O'Hara is once more driven abroad by his relentless creditors"—to remain out of England; and the General and his former subordinate were delighted to renew their acquaintance.

"He is pleasanter than ever," Lord Edward wrote, to his mother; "and enters into all one's ideas, fanciful as well as comical. We divert ourselves amazingly with all the people here; but this is when he is not 'all over General,' as he calls it. . . . I feel grown quite a soldier again since I came to this place, and should like to be in a regiment here very much." And then he confesses to an attack of home-sickness. "I wrote you the other day a letter which I was ashamed to send; I had got up *particularly* fond of you, and had determined to give up all improvement whatever, and set out to you by the shortest road without stopping. . . . I really cannot stay much longer without seeing you. . . . Often when I see a ship sailing I think how glad I should be if I were aboard, and on my passage to you!"

He had got her the seeds of a plant which would grow at Frescati; and had to hurry off, to dine with a lady who had been up to the elbows in custards to receive the General.

Notwithstanding the fact that he had left his heart in England, Lord Edward seems to have contrived to extract considerable enjoyment out of his wanderings in Spain, with a muleteer and black Tony for com-

panions. He was popular wherever he went ; and so ready to make friends with those with whom he was brought into contact, that, as he told his mother, there was hardly a place through which he passed in which he did not leave an acquaintance with whom he felt quite sorry to part. In spite, however, of his delight in the novelty of all he saw, by the time that he arrived at Madrid impatience to find himself once more at home was mastering him.

“I wanted to set off to you by post,” he wrote to the Duchess, only three hours after his arrival, “and should have been with you, in that case, in seven days. It was to cost me forty pounds ; but Tony remonstrated, and insisted that it was very foolish, when I might go for five guineas, and,—in short, he prevailed.”

His return to England was not attended, so far as the impending love affair was concerned, with good fortune. The Duke of Richmond indeed, uncle to both cousins, showed himself anxious to further his nephew's wishes, but his brother was so much opposed to the match that he ended by forbidding the lover his house.

Lord Edward under these circumstances displayed more wisdom than might have been anticipated. Finding himself unable, whilst remaining at home, to get the better of his disappointment, and no doubt unsettled and restless, he decided, though not relinquishing the hope of ultimate success, to absent himself from England for a time by joining his regiment, now stationed at New Brunswick. In May, 1788, therefore, he sailed for America.

CHAPTER VI

1788—1789

Lord Edward in New Brunswick—Second Love Affair—Letters to his Mother—Irish Affairs—The Duke of Leinster—Lord Edward declines to seek Promotion—Adventurous Expedition — Native Tribes — Disappointment—Return Home.

LORD EDWARD was more than eighteen months on the other side of the Atlantic. It was his last holiday before he set his hand in earnest to the plough and threw himself, for life and for death, into the cause to which his few remaining years were to be dedicated.

Unknown to the public as he still was, except as a younger brother of the Duke of Leinster and an obscure member of the Irish Parliament, his own letters form almost the sole source of information we possess as to this period of his life. There are, fortunately, a greater number of them available for this purpose than at most other stages of his career, and they give a graphic picture of the manner after which his life was passed in New Brunswick.

If it was a holiday shadowed by present disappointment, it was not unlightened by hope ; and there is

apparent, besides, throughout the time of his absence from home, a manly and spirited determination to keep the wolves of regret at bay, and to set himself courageously to face the future and whatever it might have in store for him.

It may well have been that his second attachment was of a deeper nature than his boyish devotion to Lady Catherine Meade ; but it is no less clear that he steadily refused to be wholly absorbed by it, and that he had ceased, at least in his normal condition, to look upon love-making as the sole object of a man's life. Even in his confidences to his mother a new tone is perceptible ; and the dawn is apparent of that obstinate determination not to be beaten which is so essential an element in the attitude with which the leader of a forlorn hope should meet the chances of life.

"I love Georgina more than ever," he tells the Duchess, at a date when his absence had already lasted some months ; "and if she likes me, can never change." He is still young enough to believe in immutability, but old enough by this time to make it provisional : "... I shall never, I think, be happy without her ; neither do I say that I shall be absolutely unhappy." And again : "As long as there is the smallest hope of my being happy with Georgina, it is not possible to be happy with any one else. Dearest mother, after yourself, I think she is the most perfect creature on earth."

It is not the language of a man who felt that life

and death hung in the balances. It was well, as the event proved, that it was not so.

He had not been without other causes of disturbance besides the uncertainty attending his love-affairs. To the grief he always felt at being parted from his mother there had been added in this instance the additional pain resulting from the consciousness that she had felt disapproval, or even in some degree displeasure, at his flight from England, decided upon without her sanction and unknown to her. It was only in the month of August that she withdrew her disapprobation of the step.

His letters in the meantime had, however, been as full and confidential as ever. "Depend upon it, dearest mother," he assures the Duchess in the first, written only three days after his arrival at Halifax, "I will not miss an opportunity of writing to you."

The town was filled with Irish; the brogue was to be heard to perfection; and he was lodged at the house of a countryman, Mr. Cornelius O'Brien, who himself claimed relationship with the FitzGerald.

"I accept the relationship," added Lord Edward with a touch of humour, "and his *horse*, for thirty miles up the country."

The regiment was stationed at St. Johns, New Brunswick; and by the middle of July, after a long and fatiguing journey, he had joined it. As usual, his interest in the new forms of life with which he had become acquainted on the way was keen; and he describes in especial a day during which he had

been obliged to delay his journey, and which had been passed in the cabin of a couple of aged settlers, with whose history he had evidently, after his custom, become fully conversant before quitting their abode.

"It was," he says, "I think, as odd and as pleasant a day (in its way) as ever I passed. . . . Conceive, dearest mother, arriving about twelve o'clock in a hot day at a little cabin upon the side of a rapid river, the banks all covered with woods, not a house in sight, and there finding a little, old, clean, tidy woman spinning, with an old man of the same appearance weeding salad. The old pair, on our arrival, got as active as if only five-and-twenty, the gentleman getting wood and water, the lady frying bacon and eggs, both talking a great deal, telling their story: how they had been there thirty years, and how their children were settled, and when either's back was turned remarking how old the other had grown; and at the same time all kindness, cheerfulness, and love to each other." Then he goes on to describe what followed: the spirits of the old couple subsiding as night drew on; the evening passed in the "wild quietness" of the place; himself, Tony, and the guide, together with their hosts, sitting all on one log at the cabin door. It is clear that the charm of the woods had cast its spell upon the guest. "My dearest mother, if it was not for you, I believe I never should go home—at least, I thought so at that moment."

That, making his observations upon the conditions

of life prevailing in a comparatively new country, he should have singled out for special commendation the absence of class distinctions, is worth noting as an indication, thus early, of the temper of mind which readily led to his future identification with the principles of the revolution.

"The equality of everybody and of their manner of life," he says, "I like very much. There are no gentlemen. Everybody is on a footing, provided he works and wants nothing. Every man is exactly what he can make himself, or *has* made himself by industry. . . . I own," reverting to more personal matters, "I often think how happy I could be with Georgina in some of the spots I see ; and envied every young farmer I met, whom I saw sitting down with a young wife, whom he was going to work to maintain."

He kept his promise and proved a good correspondent, Tony, in whose charge the Duchess had apparently placed the matter, being always at hand to remind his master of his duty in that respect. "There has not passed a day yet," Lord Edward writes, "without his telling me I had best write now, or I should go out and forget it." Indeed, the relations between master and servant would seem to have been rather those of friend with friend than the ordinary recognition of loyal service well rendered. "His black face," said Lord Edward again, "is the only thing that I yet feel attached to." "I have nothing more to say," he writes on another occasion,

“except that the faithful Tony enquires after you all, and seems as pleased when I get a letter as if it were to him ; he always puts me in mind to write. I have found he has one fault : he is avaricious ; he begins already to count the money both he and I are to save.” And once more, when he has manifestly been suffering from a bad attack of home-sickness : “The faithful Tõny talks of you a great deal ; he and I have long conversations about you all every morning.”

Whether or not Tony’s representations were necessary to ensure regularity of correspondence, so soon as Lord Edward had the pen in his hand it always proved that of a ready writer. No one was ever more keen in his enjoyment of novelty, nor more eager to share his interests with those from whom he was absent.

With regard to the panegyrics, now of the customs of the European settlers with whom he was brought into contact, now of the manner of life of the original inhabitants, which are to be found scattered through his letters, it may likely enough be true, as a critic has asserted, that the attraction he professed towards the simpler modes of existence was, in part at least, the result of a fashion introduced by Rousseau. But to be infected by a fashion is not necessarily to be guilty of affectation, nor is originality, fortunately, an essential condition of sincerity. It must also be borne in mind that there were, in his case, personal arguments which no doubt predisposed him to regard with favour,

for the moment at least, those primitive habits which would have minimised the importance of money. Had such customs prevailed in England, as he observes on one occasion, no difficulty would have been raised as to his marriage; no ridiculous obstacles would have been interposed in the way of real happiness; there would be no interest, no ambition, no "devilish politics" either! "The dear Ciss and Mimi"—his little half-sisters—"would be carrying wood and fetching water, while Ladies Lucy and Sophia were cooking or drying fish. As for you, dear mother, you would be smoking your pipe.

By the month of September he had received the Duchess's assurance that she withdrew her disapprobation of the step he had taken in leaving England.

"Dearest, dearest mother," he writes, in the first gladness of finding the unusual cloud between them dispelled, "I have just got your letter from sweet Frescati. How affectionate and reasonable! But I was sure you would be so when you came to reflect. You cannot think how happy you have made me! Being absent from you was unhappiness enough, without the addition of your thinking it unnecessary, and being a little angry. I own it went to my heart to feel I was the cause of so much misery to you, while at the very time, too, you thought the step I took unnecessary." After which he recapitulates his reasons, and proves over again how right his course of action had been. It will do him good in his profession, and will prevent him from being wholly taken up with

his unfortunate love affair. But nevertheless "being absent from you, my dear mother, is very terrible at times."

The indulgence of visionary speculations as to the superior felicities of savage existence did not prevent him from throwing himself with all his old ardour into the details of a soldier's life; and the sternness of his views concerning military duty is a curious and significant trait in a character so gentle and in many respects so careless. He had no desire to be a toy soldier. His presence with his regiment, he told his mother, was his duty according to those strict rules he required from others, and was only entering into the true spirit of a soldier, "without which spirit a military life is, and must be, the devil." Besides, suddenly descending from the somewhat high position he had taken up, and advancing another and a different argument by which to reconcile the Duchess to his absence, "I am always disagreeable when I am in love, and perhaps you would all have grown to *think* me disagreeable."

The opinion of William Cobbett, at that time sergeant-major of the 54th, in which he was serving, as to the character borne by Lord Edward in his own regiment is worth quoting. He was, Cobbett told Pitt, in answer to some questions addressed to him by the minister, "a most humane and excellent man, and the only *really honest* officer he had ever known"—a testimony which, though favourable to the subject of it, one may hope was unduly severe upon the rest of the service.

There was yet another reason, besides those appealing to the soldier and the lover, which made Lord Edward rejoice to be absent from Ireland at the present juncture. "Devilish politics" were not going well there. The country indeed remained quiet, but in Dublin and in Parliament certain changes had taken place which would have rendered his position at home a difficult one.

The Duke of Rutland had been succeeded in the Viceroyalty by Lord Buckingham, whose possession of a Catholic wife would, it had been hoped, serve to propitiate public opinion. But neither this circumstance, nor the conciliatory measures to which resort had been made, had availed to counterbalance the personal unpopularity of the new Lord Lieutenant, a man of haughty temper and unprepossessing manners, and gifted besides with a talent for taking offence. He also combined with the "expensive genius" in the use of public money of which Grattan accused him the tendency to personal parsimony—a failing peculiarly unfortunate in a man chosen to replace a predecessor distinguished in especial by his reckless generosity. The great Irish families placed themselves gradually in opposition, more perhaps to the Viceroy personally than to his administration; and on the occasion of his refusal to forward an address from the Irish Parliament desiring the Prince of Wales to exercise the Royal authority during the illness of the King, a vote of censure was passed upon him by both houses.

The opinion entertained with regard to these pro-

ceedings by acute observers on the other side of St. George's Channel is expressed by Horace Walpole, who observed in a letter to Lady Ossory written in February, 1789, that he should not be surprised, were Lord Buckingham to be supported in the imperative mood so *judiciously* adopted at the commencement of the American troubles, if the Irish were to weigh anchor and sail into the Atlantic Ocean of Independence after the colonies ; so that the son, like the father—George Grenville—would have the honour of losing another sovereignty. "If all this should happen," he adds, "pray advertize me in time, madam, that I may always admire the Marquis of Buckingham."

There was yet another and a more personal reason, besides the unsatisfactory condition of public affairs, which led Lord Edward to congratulate himself that he was, for the moment, debarred from taking an active part in Parliamentary proceedings.

The FitzGerald family, united as they were in affection, were apt to take different sides in politics. Lady Sarah Napier, giving an account of her nephews some months later, included three of the brotherhood—Lord Edward himself, his eldest brother the Duke, and Henry FitzGerald—in the ranks of the Opposition, Lord Charles and Lord Robert being, on the contrary, counted amongst Pitt's supporters. At the time her description was written she was doubtless justified in declaring her eldest nephew to be "stout," and he had even taken so decided a part in opposition to the Viceroy as to become one of the Commissioners

deputed to deliver to the Prince the address which Lord Buckingham had refused to transmit. But at the beginning of the latter's tenure of office the Duke of Leinster had not refused his support to the new Lord Lieutenant, and had even consented to accept at his hands the post of Master of the Rolls.¹ To the temporary apostasy from the traditional principles of the FitzGeralds of which his brother had been guilty in quitting the ranks of the Opposition Lord Edward alluded in no measured terms.

"After the part dear Leinster has acted," he says in October 1788, framing his censure characteristically enough, "I should have been ashamed to show my face in Ireland. . . . I certainly this winter would not have supported him, though I would not oppose him : he would have been angry, and there would have been a coolness which would have vexed me very much. I have had many quiet, serious hours here to think about what he has done, and I cannot reconcile myself to it by any argument. His conduct both to the public and to individuals is not what it ought to have been. In short, my dear mother, it hurts me very much, though I do all I can to get the better of it. I know it is weakness and folly ; but then the action is done—the shame is incurred."

Anxious to avoid so much as the appearance of

¹ The Duke's predecessor in this office had been that Rigby of whom the story is told that, consulted in jest by the Heir-Apparent as to his choice of a wife, he had made answer that he was not yet drunk enough to give advice to a Prince of Wales about marrying.

soliciting a favour from his brother's new friends on his own account, he adds an injunction that no steps should be taken by Mr. Ogilvie with regard to his promotion. He was determined to receive nothing till he was out of Parliament. He was content with his present position, and had no ambition as to rank. "The feeling of shame is what I never could bear. . . . And pray do you tell Leinster from me," he reiterates, "that I do not wish to purchase at present, or that he should do anything about a lieut-colonelcy." And they are to remember how obstinate he is when once he has made up his mind.

To Mr. Ogilvie himself he wrote in the same spirit : "Leinster's conduct is too foolish and shabby—I hate thinking of it. I am determined, however, it shall not vex me ; but that I may be totally clear, I must beg you will not mention anything about me to him. . . . Tony says, if Lord Robert"—who had thrown in his lot with the Government—"goes on in the way he is doing, he will soon be a major. I believe Henry and I are the only two honest ones in the family."

With regard to any advantage to accrue to himself from his brother's change of front, his obstinacy remained unabated. But he was induced by the remonstrances of the Duke of Richmond to reconsider his determination to withdraw his support from his brother in Parliament. The letter in which he declared himself convinced of his duty in this respect to the man to whom he owed his seat is too curious

an example of the Parliamentary morality of the day to be omitted here.

"I have got a letter," he tells his mother, "from Uncle Richmond, which was as kind as possible ; everything he does only makes one love him the more. He says in his letter that as Leinster is come over completely to the Government, he can see no reason why I should not now act with my brother and uncle. In my answer I have agreed with him, and said that I certainly shall ; because, upon consideration, though I think Leinster wrong, and told him so beforehand, yet as he *has* taken that part, it would be wrong not to support him—we being his members, and brought in by him with an idea that he might depend upon our always acting with him."¹

That a man of Lord Edward's stamp, and holding his pronounced views, should have been able to persuade himself that he was morally bound to hold his vote at the service of the man by whom he had been returned to Parliament, however mistaken he might consider him, is a strange illustration of the prevailing code of political honour. But it likewise affords a striking proof that he was in no way eager to adopt a line of his own or to vindicate his independence ; and his conduct on this occasion lends additional weight

¹ There is abundant evidence that a member of Parliament who sat as nominee of the owner of a borough was generally considered bound in honour to support his patron's policy or retire. During the Union debates upwards of sixty such members had to retire and give place to those who would vote for the Union.

to the reasons which afterwards led to so different a course of action on his part.

To reap any personal advantage from his submission was a wholly different matter ; and he reiterated his determination to accept nothing from the Duke's new friends : " I am determined *not* to take anything, lieut.-colonelcy or anything else. I wish my actions not to be biassed by any such motive ; but that I may feel I am only acting in this manner because I think it right. . . . I have written to Uncle Richmond to this same purpose, telling how I meant to act, and how I felt, and therefore trust he will not persist in trying to get me a lieut.-colonelcy. I am content as I am—I am not ambitious to get on. I like the service for its own sake ; whether major, lieut.-colonel, or general, it is the same to me. High rank in it I do not aspire to ; if I am found fit for command, I shall get it ; if I am not, God knows I am better without it. The sole ambition I have is to be deserving. To deserve a reward is to me far pleasanter than to obtain it. I am afraid you will all say I am foolish about this ; but as it is a folly that hurts nobody, it may have its fling. I will not, however, trouble you any more about all this hanged stuff, for I am tired of thinking of it."

At present he was at a safe distance from the scene of action, nor was there any immediate prospect of his return to Ireland. Winter had set in—the winter of 1788-9—and his attention was, so far as his military duties admitted of it, chiefly devoted to skating. There

were hunting parties too, and marches over the snow, involving nights spent camping out in the woods, wrapped in a blanket, the moon shining through the branches, the snow banked up around, and a fire burning in the centre of the little encampment—a mode of life so much to Lord Edward's taste that he doubted whether he would ever again be able to reconcile himself to living within four walls.

In England, meanwhile, the question of his promotion had come once more under consideration. The aspect of public affairs had undergone a change both there and in Ireland. His brother's brief alliance with the Government, although news of it had not yet reached him, was already dissolved, and the Duke had been dismissed from his office.

With the passing of the Regency Bill and the accession to power of the Prince of Wales it was confidently expected that his friends, the Whigs, would displace the present Government; and a letter of Fox's, written at this juncture to his cousin Henry FitzGerald, gives proof of his intention to make all use of the means which would be placed at his disposal to forward, in accordance with the frank and open fashion of the day, the interests of his family.

After expressing the satisfaction he would feel in acting with the Duke of Leinster, now returned to the Whig fold, he proceeded to assure Lord Henry of his good offices with regard to those members of the FitzGerald family who had remained within it.

"With respect to you and Edward," he wrote,

"I must be ungrateful indeed if I did not consider the opportunity of showing my friendship to you two as one of the pleasantest circumstances attending power. One of the first acts of the Regency will be to make Edward Lieut.-Colonel of the Royal Irish; and if a scheme which is in agitation takes place, I think I shall have an opportunity of getting for you, too, a lift in your profession."

As he anticipated for himself a return to the Foreign Office, he wished, with a view to future arrangements, to learn the views of Lord Edward and his brother with regard to employment abroad. As to Lord Robert, whose rapid advancement, it will be remembered, had been prophesied by Tony, in consequence of his adherence to the Tory Government, he would have to wait a little, but might be assured that his prospects should not suffer owing to his cousin's accession to office.

The King's unexpected recovery put an end for the time to the realisation of Fox's benevolent schemes, with which indeed Lord Edward can only have become acquainted at a later date.

At the present moment he was occupied with other matters than even military advancement.

In February—his cousin's letter bore the date of the 1st of that month—he wrote to his stepfather to announce a projected journey to Quebec, to be undertaken in the company of a brother-officer, Tony, and two woodsmen.

"It will appear strange to you, or any people in

England," he wrote, "to think of starting in February, with four feet of snow on the ground, to march through a desert wood of one hundred and seventy-five miles ; but it is nothing. . . . It will be a charming journey, I think, and quite new."

It was, in fact, an adventurous undertaking, described by an inhabitant of Quebec as both arduous and dangerous ; the route, lying, as it did, entirely through uninhabited woods, morasses, and across mountains, having never yet been attempted by the Indians themselves. To Lord Edward an enterprise recommended by its novelty, and possibly by the risk attaching to it, was naturally alluring ; and his love troubles and political regrets were alike thrown into the background by the prospect. Writing in excellent spirits, he sends the comforting message to his sisters that he is as great a fool as ever, and fears that his folly will stick to him all the days of his life—he did not guess how few they were to be—and to his mother his love and the assurance that "*le petit sauvage*" will think of her often in the woods. "She has a rope round my heart that gives hard tugs at it, and it is all I can do not to give way."

The journey was accomplished successfully, thirty days being taken to cover a distance of a hundred and seventy miles. Most of the way lay through woods up to that time considered impassable ; it was only when the River St. Lawrence had been crossed that the exploring party fell in with some Indians, in whose company the remainder of the journey was made.

“They were very kind to us,” wrote Lord Edward, who, with his singular faculty of making friends with all sorts and conditions of men, had evidently entered upon terms of good fellowship with them at once, “and said we were ‘all one brother’—all ‘one Indian.’ . . . You would have laughed to have seen me carrying an old squaw’s pack, which was so heavy I could hardly waddle under it. However, I was well paid whenever we stopped, for she always gave me the best bits, and most soup, and took as much care of me as if I had been her own son ; in short, I was quite *l’enfant chéri*. We were quite sorry to part : the old lady and gentleman both kissed me very heartily.”

There had been other pleasures on the journey besides the society of his Indian friends : the luxury of a good spruce bed before the fire after a long day’s march, or a moose chase on a clear moonlight night—to be thoroughly enjoyed, however, only so long as it was unsuccessful. “At first it was charming, but as soon as we had him in our power it was melancholy. However, it was soon over, and it was no pain to him. If it were not for this last part, it would be a delightful amusement” ; and, after all—“we are beasts, dearest mother, I am sorry to say it”—in the enjoyment of eating the victim, regret was forgotten.

All had, in fact, gone well, and he had nothing left to wish for, except—the old refrain is repeated in his letter to his mother—“how I long to feel all your arms about my neck !”

He had expected and intended to be at home some

months earlier than was actually the case, for the temptation of making a further exploration by returning to England *viâ* the Mississippi and New Orleans proved too strong to be resisted ; and in company with an Indian chief who had himself paid a visit to England, he carried out the plan, passing through native villages, canoeing down rivers, and dancing with Indian ladies, whose manners he found particularly to his taste. At Detroit, it is true, his spirits were a little shadowed by the necessity of parting with a fellow-traveller—he does not mention of which sex ; but, remembering that *les plus courtes folies sont les meilleures*, he found consolation at the same place in his adoption into the Bear Tribe of native Indians, whose chief, after a fashion that has found a parallel in later days, formally inducting his friend Lord Edward FitzGerald into the tribe as one of its chiefs, bestowed upon him the name of Eghnidai, “for which I hope he will remember me as long as he lives.”

The journey was not one to be accomplished quickly. It was only in December that the traveller reached New Orleans, where a shock awaited him.

Cut off from communication with England during his wanderings, he had received no news from home for months ; and when at last letters reached him, they conveyed the intelligence of an event which involved the final downfall of the hopes which had buoyed him up throughout his voluntary exile. The girl upon whom his heart had been set had married another man.

Writing in May of this year, his aunt Lady Sarah Napier gives free expression to her own indignation at the treatment her nephew had received. While the "dear spirited boy" had been living in wild woods to pass the time till the consent of her parents to his marriage with the cousin he adored could be obtained, they had cruelly married her to Lord Apsley (afterwards Lord Bathurst), and the ungrateful girl had consented. "We dread," adds Lady Sarah, "the effect this news will have on him."

It was undoubtedly a blow, sharp and severe. Yet one cannot but think, reading the letters written by him when the wound was still fresh, that it was scarcely so crushing a one as his aunt feared or as his biographer—a poet and something of a courtier too, and writing when the lady was still alive—would have us believe. That he felt the disappointment keenly there is no more reason to doubt than that, had his love been true to him, he would have also remained faithful. But his language was neither that of a broken-hearted man, nor of one who desired to assume that attitude.

Writing to his brother, he acknowledges the letter which had brought him the news; and using the Spanish language—a task which no man labouring under the stress of overpowering grief would have set himself—he declared that he was submitting with patience to all human vicissitudes.

In a second letter on the same subject, dated two or three weeks later, a strain of bitterness mingled.

“I bore all the accounts of Georgina tolerably well. I must say with Cardenis, ‘That which her beauty has built up, her actions have destroyed. By the first I understood her to be an angel; by the last I know her to be a woman.’ But this is enough of this disagreeable subject.”

In the same letter he sends his love to dear Madame de —, “who, upon cool consideration, is as charming a creature as is in the world—in fact, she is sincere, which is a quality rather rare.”

If a blow had been inflicted upon his faith in human nature by the infidelity of his cousin, one cannot but believe, judging by the sequel, that it was one that quickly recovered. It might have been well for Lord Edward himself—well also for the cause to which he was to devote himself—had his confidence in the sincerity of human kind been less.

Thus ended Lord Edward’s second love affair. It is said that another dramatic incident came near to being added to the story. On his arrival in London after his prolonged absence he had hurried at once to his mother’s house, where it so chanced that she was that evening entertaining her niece, Lady Apsley, and her husband at dinner. It was only by the recognition of Lord Edward’s voice outside by another cousin, General Fox, and by his prompt interposition, that the discarded lover was prevented from introducing a disconcerting and unexpected element into the family party.

CHAPTER VII

1790—1792

Lord Edward offered Command of the Cadiz Expedition—
Refuses it on being returned to Parliament—Decisive
Entry on Politics—In London—Charles James Fox—
Dublin—Condition of Ireland—Whig Club—Society of
United Irishmen—Thomas Paine and his Friends—Lord
Edward in Paris.

THERE is something strange and relentless, to the eyes of those who follow the course of Lord Edward's history, in the manner in which his doom—the doom of a cause—hunted him down. He had not sought it. In character and temperament he was most unlike a man destined to be the chief actor in a tragedy. But there was no escape. It drew closer and closer, like what in truth it was, the Angel of Death.

Almost immediately upon his arrival in London a proposal was made to him. Had the plan with which it was concerned been carried into effect, the whole course of his subsequent career might have been changed.

He was still, before everything, a soldier. His political views, pronounced as they were, had as yet

taken no practical or revolutionary shape. He was committed to no course of action from which he could not, in honour, have withdrawn. For politics as a profession it has been shown that he had little liking ; while his recent experience of the difficulties in which he was liable to find himself at any moment involved by a change of front on the part of his brother may reasonably have inclined him to regard with additional distaste the position he held in the House as the Duke's nominee. Under these circumstances the Dissolution occurring in the spring of the year which saw his return to England must have been peculiarly welcome, as releasing him from the necessity of once more taking up the burden of his Parliamentary duties. He came home, as he imagined, a free man, neither contemplating nor desiring the continuance of a political career, and at liberty to devote himself for the future to the profession he loved—that of a soldier. It was while labouring under this misapprehension that he received and accepted an offer made to him by the Government, through the instrumentality of the Duke of Richmond.

Struck by the good use to which his nephew had put the opportunities of observation afforded him both during his tour in Spain and his more recent visit to the Spanish colonies, the Duke had invited him to meet Pitt and Dundas, with the result of an offer both of brevet promotion and of the command of an expedition shortly to be despatched against Cadiz.

The prospect may well have been dazzling to a

soldier of twenty-six. The proposal was one after Lord Edward's own heart, and he closed with it without hesitation ; the understanding being that, in return for the honour done him in singling him out for a position of responsibility and importance, he should no longer be found in the ranks of the Opposition.

In this arrangement there was nothing inconsistent with the determination he had expressed in the preceding year to accept nothing, at that time, from the party in power. "I am determined," he had then written, "*to have nothing till I am out of Parliament.*" He was now, or imagined himself to be, without a seat ; and that he should have felt no difficulty in giving this purely negative pledge is a proof of the firmness of his belief that he had finally withdrawn from any active participation in political life. This being the case, he would doubtless have considered it idle to allow a purposeless parade of opinions having no bearing upon action to interfere with the performance of his duty as a soldier. Had he been permitted to carry into effect his intention of retiring from Parliament and of devoting himself to his profession, the history of Ireland might have lacked one of its most tragic chapters. But Fate had ordered it otherwise.

The matter was considered practically settled. The Duke was to report the arrangement which had been arrived at to the King, of whose approval and sanction no doubt was entertained. An unexpected obstacle, however, intervened, and put an abrupt end to the

negotiations. The Duke of Leinster, against the expressed wishes of his mother, had, before the arrival of Lord Edward in England, taken the step of returning his brother to the new Parliament, as member for the county of Kildare. He was not, as he had conceived himself to be, released from the trammels of Parliamentary obligations; and on the very day following his interview with the Duke of Richmond, he was made acquainted with the fact.

It must have been a bitter disappointment—one of those to which life was accustoming him, and which were driving him more and more in a single direction. One by one, outlet after outlet for energy and devotion was becoming blocked; and every pathway barred save that which he was to be doomed to tread.

The course pointed out by honour, under these new circumstances, was plain, and he did not flinch from following it. The alternative of declining the seat to which his brother had nominated him does not appear to have suggested itself to his mind; and since he was, though against his will, to occupy once more the position of a member of Parliament, it was impossible that he should take his seat there as a supporter of the party which he had consistently opposed. In vain his uncle, angered at the frustration, by what he considered his nephew's obstinacy, of his plans on his behalf, warned him that nothing in the shape of promotion or advancement was to be looked for by a man who refused his vote to the Government. Lord Edward withdrew, without delay or hesitation, the *quasi*

pledge obtained from him ; relinquished the chance of military distinction that he had been offered ; and resigned himself to a return to the treadmill from which he had imagined himself to be released. On a former occasion, owing to a mistaken principle of honour, he had submitted his better judgment to the representations of the Duke ; but on the present one, not the less because to have yielded would have been to his own manifest advantage, and perhaps strengthened in his resolution by the consciousness that the bribe offered was the one of all others most alluring to his spirit of enterprise, he remained firm in his determination. The die was cast, and Lord Edward, from the ranks of the soldiers, passed finally into those of the politicians.

For the present, however, if his doom was gaining upon him, he remained unaware of it. Men do not always recognise the summons of their destiny.

When the new Parliament met in July, the majority of the Government was found to have received a slight increase. Grattan, however, with Lord Henry FitzGerald as his colleague, had won the City of Dublin for the Opposition ; and amongst the members now returned for the first time was Arthur O'Connor, nephew to Lord Longueville, who, though entering Parliament as a supporter of the Government, became later on one of the most intimate associates of Lord Edward, and a prominent member of the national party.

The summer session was short, and after a large sum of money had been unanimously voted in view of the war in which Lord Edward had hoped to bear a leading part, Parliament was adjourned, and he was at liberty to return to London ; where, in the company of his mother and sisters, most of the interval was spent until the reassembling of the House recalled him, some six months later, to Dublin.

“Once I get home,” he had promised the Duchess, “you shall do what you please with me.” There was little doubt that her pleasure would be to keep him at her side ; and there he remained, paying her his old tender attentions, and performing, besides, family duties of the kind indicated in a letter of Walpole’s, when, mentioning that a match of Miss Ogilvie’s—not more than fifteen at this time—was off, he adds that her brother, Lord Edward FitzGerald, had carried her dismissal of the suitor, and “did not deliver it in dulcet words.”

Upon the episode thus concluded, as well as upon the family life of the joint *ménage* of FitzGeralds and Ogilvies, light is thrown by a letter of Lady Sarah Napier’s ; who, writing in October, 1790, relates that her sister the Duchess of Leinster, being at Tunbridge with her family, “saw Lord Chichester there, a most pleasing young man, whom all the misses wanted to catch as a prize, and while she was wondering *who* the lot would fall on, he took the greatest fancy to her *little* girl Cecilia Ogilvie, just fifteen, who went out only now and then as a favour. He

talked to her much, sought her out in rides and walks, and is so excessively in love with her that it would be like enchantment, if it was not certain that she is, not *handsome*, but one of the most bewitching little creatures ever known." Lord Chichester's father, Lord Donegall, himself engaged to be married for the third time, was for retarding the marriage, alleging as his reason that better settlements would be made at a later date. "It is to be hoped," Lady Sarah adds, evidently sceptical as to the pretext, "Lord Donegall won't delay it long, as those delays are foolish, and a little hard on the young folks, who are very much in love."

The Duchess's gratification at an arrangement which would, in case of her death, secure a home to both her younger children, had been great; for though the little Ogilvie sisters had been "loved most excessively" by all the FitzGeralds, their mother felt a natural pride, so Lady Sarah added, "in not liking to have them run the risk of being looked on as *half-sisters*."¹ Her disappointment—reflected, one may believe, in the bearing of Lord Edward to which Walpole makes allusion—must have been proportionately great when, either owing to Lord Donegall's policy of delay or to some other cause, the engagement came to an end. At fifteen, however, it can scarcely have been a very serious matter to the person chiefly concerned.

Even independently of the presence of his mother,

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, Vol. II., p. 78.

London must have had many attractions for Lord Edward. Whatever might be the case in Dublin, there was here no lack of congenial society. Charles James Fox was, in spite of the fourteen years which divided the cousins in age, his intimate friend. It has been seen how, at a moment when his own return to office seemed almost assured, the latter had at once prepared to give practical expression to his affection. It was an affection which lasted to the end. "If you see my dear, dear Edward," he wrote to Henry FitzGerald when Lord Edward was in prison—when, indeed, though tidings of the final catastrophe had not yet reached England, he was already dead—"I need not desire you to tell him that I love him with the warmest affection." While for Lord Edward, young and enthusiastic, the older man, simple and unaffected in spite of his great intellectual powers, must have possessed singular charm. Unlike as were the two in character, they were not without tastes in common. Lord Edward's love for an open-air life, for country sights and sounds, whether in the untrodden forests and plains of the West or in his own Irish home, is everywhere apparent; and the reply of his great cousin, when urged, some ten years later, to take a London house, might almost have come from his pen. "A sweet westerly wind," wrote Fox, "a beautiful sun, all the thorns and elms just budding, and the nightingales just beginning to sing," did not incline him to listen to his correspondent's suggestion. The blackbirds and thrushes

would indeed, he added, have been quite sufficient to have refuted any arguments in favour of it.

To Lord Edward's Irish nature his cousin's gift of eloquence must also have especially appealed. "He seemed," said Godwin, a witness not prone to enthusiasm, "to come as an orator immediately from the forming hand of Nature. . . . It was by sudden flashes and emanations that he electrified the heart, and shot through the blood of his hearers." And adding to his dazzling talents the charm of manner, the gay and reckless temper, for which he was distinguished, together with that power of forgetting the future which Madame du Deffand described when, some years earlier, she said, "*Il ne s'embarrasse pas du lendemain*," it would be no wonder if over the younger kinsman on whom he had bestowed his affection he should have exercised irresistible fascination.

Nor did he stand alone. It was a period of unusual brilliancy on the part of the great Whig houses. A few years earlier the Prince of Wales, fallen under the influence of Fox, had been unlearning, at Devonshire House and other such places of resort, the austere and rigid lessons of his secluded boyhood, and receiving his initiation into codes of politics and morals of a widely different nature to those in which he had been instructed during that time of strict and careful discipline. Sheridan, FitzPatrick, Hare, and the rest formed a brilliant group; and Fox, still forgetting to-morrow, was its presiding spirit.

At these houses, open as a matter of course to Fox's

first cousin, Lord Edward must have enjoyed ample opportunities of meeting all the most eminent members of the party to which he had always been united by sympathy and conviction; while to the chances of political enlightenment that they afforded, would be added, there and elsewhere, allurements of a less serious nature. To society, unpolitical as well as political, he possessed, as FitzGerald and as Lennox, a passport, enjoying the privilege of free admission into the inner circle of that eighteenth-century London which is described with such graphic and lifelike fidelity in the memoirs of the time.

At all events, and from whatever causes, it is clear that the interest attaching to the great centre of civilisation and social life was appreciated to the full by "*le petit sauvage*" who, a year earlier, had been so strongly sensible of the superiority of primitive modes of existence. Possibly he felt a preference for extremes in such matters. Or, again, it may be that, intercourse with Indians and colonists on the other side of the Atlantic having had time to lose its novelty, a reaction had taken place in favour of other forms of life. Nor must the fact be disguised that, notwithstanding the recent shipwreck undergone by his affections, it is to be inferred from the language of his biographer that he had already contrived, with his "extreme readiness to love," to supply, in some sort, the blank left by his faithless cousin.

"When I am not happy," he once told his mother,

"I must be either soldiering, or preparing to be a soldier, for stay quiet I believe I cannot. Why did you give me such a head or such a heart?"

In the absence of occupation of a military nature, he was pretty sure to have taken refuge, if only to pass the time, in that of making love; and the fact that the opportunity of such distraction was to be found for the moment in London added no doubt materially to the distaste with which, recalled to Dublin by the opening of Parliament, he obeyed the summons. Life in Ireland, under the circumstances, offered few advantages. Nor was he in the mood to profit by such alleviations as might have been available.

"Dublin," he wrote discontentedly, "has been very lively this week, and promises as much for the next; but I think it is all the same thing—La D—— and La S——, and a few young competitors for their places. I have been a good deal with these two. They want to console me for London, but it won't do, though I own they are very pleasant."

He had discovered what was the worst thing that could be said of a Dublin woman—namely, that she was cold. "You cannot conceive what an affront it is reckoned," he tells the Duchess, concluding his letter, however, in haste, having received an invitation from the lady to whom he had unwittingly offered this supreme insult, but who he now trusts is preparing to make up the quarrel.

The year 1791 was an eventful one, so far as Ireland was concerned. Already the previous summer had

been marked by the foundation of the Whig Club, a powerful association formed with the object of combining together the Irish upper classes for the purpose of pushing forward, by constitutional methods, the reform of Parliament and the maintenance of the constitution. The Duke of Leinster, returned to his first political faith, was amongst the original members of the Club, together with various other men of moderation and weight, possessing large stakes in the country. The formation of an association of the kind was doubtless a significant fact. But others more important still had followed. French ideas were daily gaining ground ; and even in sections of society uninfected by them the agitation for a reform in the national representation and for Catholic emancipation was assuming formidable dimensions. Dissension had broken out in the Catholic Committee, and the secession of above sixty of the members of most weight in point of position had left the management of that body, hitherto strangely moderate in its demands, in the hands of the more advanced and democratic section, which had plainly the sympathy of the country enlisted on its side.

It was, however, in the autumn of the year 1791 that the most far-reaching and important development by which the agitation had been marked took place, in the formation of the Society of the United Irishmen. In the foundation of this body Wolfe Tone, then emerging into notoriety, took perhaps the most important share.



Photo, by Geoghegan.

DEATH MASK OF THEOBALD WOLFE TONE.

Born in 1763, he had been educated at Trinity College and called to the Bar. He had at this time been for some months making himself a name in the field of Irish politics by means of his pamphlets on questions of the day ; and had been for a short period a member of the Whig Club, quitting, however, that association on becoming convinced that in separation alone lay any hope for the future of the country. A Protestant himself, it was his constant endeavour to bring the Catholic Committee—of which he became Assistant Secretary—into touch with the Ulster reformers.

He has himself left upon record both the general aim he set before him and the means by which he hoped to reach it. "To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government," he wrote, "to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of our past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denomination of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means."

Notwithstanding, however, the extreme nature of the views he personally entertained, the avowed object of the society of which he was one of the chief founders went no further, at least at first, than the obtaining of an equal representation of all the Irish people, independently of the religion they professed ;

and the combination, for that purpose, of all faiths and creeds. The terms of the oath administered, even when it had been altered, at a later period, to suit the exigencies of the situation, were indeed curiously temperate.

"I do voluntarily declare," so the formula began, "that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion," the object to be pursued being an equal representation, and the further pledge being added that no evidence should be borne by members of the society against their comrades with regard to any act performed in the spirit of the obligation incurred.

However moderate might be its professed objects, the formation of a society banded together for the purpose of abolishing religious animosities and uniting Catholics and Protestants for the vindication of their common rights marked an important epoch in Irish history. The astounding rapidity with which the association spread proved that the country was ripe for it.

On Lord Edward's career the new society had a most important bearing, although, so far from being in any practical manner as yet implicated in the movement of which it was the outcome and result, he appears to have been barely acquainted with the man who had been its first leader. Wolfe Tone, who was compelled to leave Ireland in 1795, before the breaking out of the rebellion for which he, more

than any other conspirator, had paved the way, though mentioning Lord Edward FitzGerald with a cordial and generous appreciation bordering on enthusiasm, explicitly states in his autobiography that he knew him but very little.

It would, in fact, seem that even at this comparatively late date, and at a time when the whole of the country, in a ferment around him, was presenting an object-lesson in the most efficacious methods of breeding rebels, Lord Edward's revolutionary views, like those of so many of the English Whigs with whom he consorted, were mainly confined to the region of abstract ideas. In point of practice, he continued to content himself with a consistent adherence in Parliament to the popular side. Yet, nevertheless, his political education was not standing still, and the way was doubtless being prepared for future developments in the sphere of action.

It was about this time that his name occurs—somewhat incongruously amongst the others which make up the list—mentioned by Mr. Rickman, friend, host, and disciple of Thomas Paine, as one of those visitors accustomed to seek the society of his guest.

Paine himself, just come into additional notoriety by the publication of his celebrated treatise on the "Rights of Man," was a teacher eminently qualified to point out to a neophyte the connection between revolution as a theoretical principle and as a practical force; while his lessons would carry the greater weight as coming from a man who was a sharer at the

moment, by reason of the doctrine he had proclaimed, in the enthusiasm evoked by the progress of French affairs, and to whom belonged some of the glamour appertaining to a popular idol.

That Paine's own estimate of the influence exercised by his works was not distinguished by modesty is shown by an entry in the diary of Wolfe Tone some six years later, in which a conversation with the philosopher is recorded. It is there described how, mention having been made of the shattered condition of Burke's mind consequent upon the death of his only son, Paine replied, with conceit almost amounting to fatuity, that it had been in fact the publication of the "Rights of Man" which had broken the heart of the great statesman, the death of his son having done no more than develop the chagrin which had preyed upon him since the appearance of that work.

If, however, the philosopher was "vain beyond all belief," it could not be denied that he had excuses for vanity. The wild and extravagant admiration excited in some quarters by his performance might well, apart from its intrinsic merits, have afforded some justification for the excessive value set upon it by the writer.

"Hey for the New Jerusalem—the Millennium!" wrote, for example, the dramatist Holcroft, upon the appearance of the book, in almost incoherent excitement and surely not without some confusion of ideas—"and peace and beatitude be unto the soul of Thomas Paine."

Abroad, too, the appreciation of the production was great; and in a letter to Lord Stanhope—whose own admiration was modified by annoyance at the *maladresse* with which the author, by associating the anticipated fall of the British constitution with the success of the Revolution in France, had alienated English sympathy—the Comte Français de Nantes wrote that Paine's work had something "*d'original et de sauvage comme les forêts américaines.*"

Apart from the interest attaching to a man whose reputation was so widely spread, there was doubtless much in the society which gathered around him to attract one to whom it was comparatively new.

William Godwin, the pedantic author of "Political Justice," had, as well as Holcroft, enjoyed the privilege of reading Paine's great work before it was given to the public, and both men, each eminent in the world to which they belonged, would have been amongst the select spirits with whom Lord Edward was brought into association at Mr. Rickman's house. Amongst others of its frequenters are mentioned Horne Tooke, another professor of advanced ideas, the bitterness of whose disappointment at his exclusion from active political life, owing to the fact of his being a clerk in holy orders, had transformed him into an "incarnation of envy," constantly occupied in defaming the foremost men of the day; Romney, the painter; and Mary Wollstonecraft, afterwards Godwin's wife, at present engaged upon her work relating to the "Rights of Women," and not yet

occupying the position of governess to that daughter of Lord Kingston's who became the heroine of the tragedy in which, through the vengeance of her father, her lover lost his life.

Mr. Rickman's house must, in fact, have been at the moment a favourite place of resort for all who were in sympathy with the more extreme revolutionary opinions, moral, social, and political ; and from those to be met there Lord Edward was doubtless learning to apply to practical purposes the abstract theories of Whig politicians. But, drawn thither as he might be by a like interest, he can, by birth, training, and character, have had little in common with the group of clever and middle-class Bohemians of whom the circle was plainly made up. Their company would indeed have had for him the charm of novelty ; but it is difficult to imagine that it offered other or more intrinsic attractions to a man of his tastes, or that among the needy literary men, the artists, and the more or less genuine political fanatics who sought Paine's society, he may not have felt himself a trifle out of place. Community of principles, like misfortune, brings together strange bed-fellows. Winning though Lord Edward was, he possessed neither brilliant talents nor deep intellectual gifts. So far as negative evidence may be accepted as proof, he rarely opened a book save for the purposes of military education, while for any indication of artistic taste it is necessary to go back to the days of Aubigny, and to that "very pretty survey" of the

country round the Garonne, of which the fields, bordered with colour, and the trees, delineated with Indian ink, were regarded by the draughtsman with such pardonable pride. Of learned ladies too—from which class one would imagine that Mr. Paine's feminine disciples were chiefly recruited—he had so great a dread that he is said to have declined more than once the proffered opportunity of meeting Madame de Genlis, at this time on a visit to England, and thus to have deferred to a later date the inauguration of his acquaintance with her foster-daughter, his own future wife.

In matters of religion Lord Edward must have stood no less apart from the group of arrogant and aggressive sceptics into whose company circumstances had thrown him; since he remained to the last, according to the testimony of his friend Valentine Lawless, afterwards Lord Cloncurry, a Christian, devout and sincere, in spite of the efforts, repeated and persevering, which were made to shake his convictions. Nor was the son of the Duchess of Leinster likely to have found himself more in accord on social than on religious questions with this little knot of thinkers and writers—adventurers in doubtful paths.

Nevertheless, uncongenial as they might be in many ways, association with the men who formed Thomas Paine's *clientèle* in London was likely to have had too material an influence in the ripening of Lord Edward's political convictions to make it irrelevant to dwell upon them in detail here; while for Paine

himself his admiration was so genuine, and apparently so blind, as to cause him to declare that there was attaching to the philosopher a simplicity of manner, a goodness of heart, and a strength of mind, which he never before had known a man to possess.

For some part, at least, of the year 1791 master and disciple must have been parted, since Paine is said to have been compelled, in order to elude the clutches of the bailiffs, to seek some place of concealment known only to Horne Tooke and to his printer. If this account of the straits to which an ungrateful public permitted the popular author to be reduced is to be credited, it must have been all the more gratifying when, quitting England in September of the following year, in consequence of the prosecution instituted by Government on the publication of the second part of the "Rights of Man," he found himself received on his arrival at Calais with a royal salute, entertained at a public dinner, and finally returned by that town as deputy to the Assembly.

A few months later Lord Edward was once more, under changed circumstances, under the same roof as his political oracle in Paris, the consequences being this time more serious, both to himself and to Ireland, than those which had attended their former intercourse.

It was on the occasion of this visit to Paris that two events, each productive of important results, took place. He was cashiered and dismissed from the army. He also became acquainted with Pamela.

CHAPTER VIII

Pamela—Her Birth and Origin—Introduced into the Orleans Schoolroom—Early Training—Madame de Genlis and the Orleans Family—Visit to England—Southey on Pamela—Sheridan said to be engaged to Pamela—Departure for France.

WHO was Pamela? It was a question often asked during her lifetime, and which has not unfrequently been repeated since she has gone to a place where birth and parentage are of comparatively small moment. The interest that has been felt in the matter has been indeed altogether incommensurate with its importance. But it is not uncommon for a work to be the more successful by reason of its anonymity, and to the mystery which veiled her origin has been doubtless due part at least of the curiosity testified for the last hundred years with regard to Madame de Genlis's adopted daughter; the touch of romance belonging to her early history, her beauty, and the tragic circumstances connected with her marriage and widowhood investing her with an interest scarcely justified by what is known of her personality.

The theory which has found most favour, and which, though discredited alike by facts comparatively recently

come to light and by the distinct disclaimers of the persons chiefly concerned, still widely prevails among those who have in any way interested themselves in the matter, would make her the daughter of *Egalité*, Duc d'Orléans, by Madame de Genlis, his children's governess—a lady in whose person qualities commonly supposed to be antagonistic present a combination which, other alleged facts of her history taken into account, has not been considered such as necessarily to give the lie to the surmise.

In support of this hypothesis the supposed likeness of Pamela to the Orleans family has been cited, together with the fact of the fortune settled upon her by her reputed father. It should be remembered, however, with regard to this last piece of evidence, that, according to Madame de Genlis's own account of the matter, this fortune was no free gift on the part of the Duke, but was provided by the commutation of monies due to herself, and would therefore afford no proof of the recognition on his part of paternal obligations.

To set against the arguments, such as they are, based upon these circumstances, we have Madame de Genlis's distinct denial, made in later years in the presence of Pamela's daughter; the equally explicit contradiction of the Orleans, their conduct on this occasion contrasting with the admission of the claims of kinship in another case; and the disbelief in the story said to have been entertained by the FitzGerald family themselves.

The story told by her adopted mother has also received the following curious corroboration in more recent years, through the enquiries set on foot by Mr. James Fitzgerald, magistrate in the island of Fogo, Newfoundland, the place, according to Madame de Genlis, of Pamela's birth.

In the marriage contract between the latter and Lord Edward FitzGerald, the bride is described as "*Citoïenne Anne Caroline Stephanie Sims, native de Fogo, dans l'isle de Terre-neuve ; fille de Guillaume de Brixey et de Mary Sims.*"¹ This account of her birth and parentage has been very generally attributed to the inventive powers of her guardian, but Mr. Fitzgerald was informed by an inhabitant of Fogo that a daughter of his grandfather's, Mary Sims, had in fact sailed for Bristol at a date corresponding with that of Pamela's birth, in a vessel commanded by a Frenchman named Brixey, taking with her her infant daughter Nancy. Mother and child had disappeared, to be heard of no more till the appearance of Moore's *Life of Lord Edward FitzGerald* had seemed to furnish a clue to the subsequent history of little Nancy Sims.

Except with regard to the name of the father—whom Madame de Genlis, though not in the marriage register, preferred to describe as an Englishman of good birth of the name of Seymour—this story tallies well enough with her account of the matter, to which

¹ The Tournay register, probably through carelessness, gives the father's name as Berkley, and London as birthplace.

independent corroboration is also afforded by an entry in Southey's Commonplace Book, where he gives the result of certain enquiries he had himself instituted at Christchurch, the place from which the child had been despatched to France, no later than August, 1797—a date at which the incident would still have been fresh in the memory of the inhabitants of the little country town.

A woman of Bristol, he was informed—it will be remembered that the destination of Mary Sims, on leaving Fogo, had been Bristol—of the name of Sims had resided at Christchurch with an only daughter, a natural child of exceeding beauty and of about four or five years of age; of which child, in consideration of a small yearly payment, the mother had consented to relinquish the possession, allowing her to be sent to France, to serve as companion to the daughter of the Duc d'Orléans. The affair, it further appears from a letter of Southey's to Miss Bowles, was negotiated by a clergyman of the same name as his correspondent.

Thus, weighing all available evidence, it would seem that the story by which royal blood was conferred upon Madame de Genlis's *protégée* must be dismissed as, to say the least, improbable; and that it is likely that in this instance her guardian had for once adhered to the approximate truth.

It might have been well for little Nancy Sims had she been permitted to remain in the sleepy English country town, with its grey old minster, and the

broad, green meadows through which the River Avon passes to the sea ; but there is no indication that she ever again revisited her early home.

In her capacity of governess Madame de Genlis had conceived the idea of accelerating the acquisition by her pupils of the English language by the introduction of an English child into the Orleans schoolroom. Having gained the consent of the Duke to her project, she commissioned Mr. Forth, ex-Secretary to the British Ambassador at Paris, to select, during a visit to England, a little girl suitable to her purpose. It was upon the daughter of Mary Sims that the choice of Mr. Forth finally fell ; and under the care of a horse-dealer, entrusted besides with an addition to the Duke's stables, the child was accordingly despatched to Paris. "I have the honour," wrote Forth to the Duke, "of sending your Serene Highness the prettiest little girl and the handsomest mare in England."

Pamela herself declared in after-days that she perfectly recollected being delivered over to the Duc d'Orléans ; who, receiving her at a side door of the Palace, took her in his arms, kissed her, and, carrying her along some dusky passages, presented her to Madame de Genlis with the words, "*Voilà notre petit bijou !*"

Whether implicit confidence is to be placed in Pamela's reminiscences may be questioned. She was one of those women to whom it is natural to view themselves in the light of a heroine, and circumstances had fostered the disposition. If one detects in her

later recollections in particular a flavour of the melodramatic, it is only fair to remember that her training may have been partly responsible for the tendency. Madame de Genlis herself had been almost from infancy a theatrical performer, and records in her *Memoirs* that it had been at the early age of eleven, and from a young man with whom she had played comedy and tragedy for two years, that she first received a declaration of the passion she had inspired. No doubt Pamela enjoyed the full benefit of her foster-mother's instructions in this direction as well as in others. A scene is indeed described by the Marquise de Larochejacquelin which throws a curious light upon the species of training received by the child at the hands of a lady who was considered so great an authority on education that Southey recommended all who would study the subject to acquaint themselves with her works.

Taken as a child by her grandmother, the Duchesse de Civrac, to visit the Salon at an hour when only privileged guests were admitted, a meeting took place with the three little Orleans princes and their sister, also studying art under the superintendence of their governess; and Madame de Larochejacquelin, upon whose childish mind the incident had made an evident impression, relates how, struck by the unusual beauty of Pamela, then about seven years old, her grandmother had made her compliments on the subject to the little girl's guardian, receiving in reply to her questions the answer, made "à mi-voix, mais je

l'entendis, 'Oh, c'est une histoire bien touchante, bien intéressante, que celle de cette petite ; je ne puis vous la raconter en ce moment.'"

Further, with the object of proving that it was not in looks alone that her charge excelled, Madame de Genlis summoned the child, desiring her to "act Héloïse." Whereupon the little girl, plainly accustomed to the performance and nothing loath to display her talents, removed the comb by which her hair was confined, and flung herself upon the ground in an attitude expressive of an ecstasy of passion ; while the little bystander remained "*stupéfaite*," and the great lady, having expressed her appreciation of the performance in terms that left nothing to be desired, went her way to describe to her friends the version she had witnessed of the "Nouvelle Héloïse," and to mock at the system of education pursued in the Orleans schoolroom.¹

¹ The opinion entertained by Lady Sarah Lennox of the great educationalist is expressed in a letter written shortly after Lord Edward's marriage, in which the following passage occurs: "Your account of Madame Sillery and her *élèves* answers my idea of her—all pleasing to appearance, and nothing *sound* within *her* heart, whatever may be so in the young minds whom she *can* and *does* of course easily deceive. I hope we have got our lovely little niece time enough out of her care to have acquired all the *perfections* of her education, which are certainly great, as she has a *very uncommon* clever, active mind, and turns it to most useful purposes, and I trust our pretty little Sylphe (for she is not like other mortals) has not a tincture of all the double-dealing, cunning, false reasoning, and lies with which Madame S. is forced to gloss over a very common ill-conduct, because she *will* set herself *above* others in virtue, and she happens to be no better than her neighbours" (*Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, Vol. II., p. 91).

Under the guardianship of Madame de Genlis, and receiving instructions from her in the performance of other parts besides that of Héloïse, Pamela remained until the date of her marriage with Lord Edward FitzGerald.

Some months before the occurrence of that event the Duchesse d'Orleans, unable any longer to endure the position held by the *gouvernante* in her household, had made strenuous efforts to effect her dismissal; and though Madame de Genlis had at first refused to be dislodged from her post, she had been finally compelled, by a threat of exposure, to submit. Such, at least, is the account of the matter furnished by the adherents of the injured Duchess; that given by the governess being naturally of a different nature. According to the latter, the conduct of her mistress having become such that she could no longer tolerate it without injury to her self-respect, Madame de Genlis herself sent in her resignation to the Duke, in a letter of which a copy is inserted in her Memoirs. The melancholy moment, she told him, had arrived. Unless reparation should be made her within three days, she was compelled to claim her *démission*. "You know," she adds pathetically, "whether I have been gentle, patient, and temperate; but at last I am forced to adopt a course which rends my heart."

However it had been achieved, the triumph of the Duchess was of short duration. Madame de Genlis was soon recalled by the Duke, reinstated in her former post, and presently, in consequence of the

disturbed condition of Paris, was sent by him to England in charge of his daughter, Pamela being also of the party.

It was not the first visit of Pamela to England since she and the mare had crossed the Channel in each other's company. Six years earlier, as a child of twelve, she had accompanied her guardian, when the honour of a Doctor's degree had been conferred upon Madame de Genlis, and had on that occasion been taken to the house of Horace Walpole, who has left upon record his impressions of his visitors.

Walpole was not altogether an unprejudiced critic, for it is clear from the terms in which he announced to a correspondent the arrival in England of the *gouvernante* that report had not disposed him favourably towards the literary lady. There was a *bourgeois* flavour about her which was not likely to incline him to condone the faults with which she was, justly or unjustly, credited ; nor did he share Southey's admiration for her educational theories.

Expressing his disgust at Rousseau's *Confessions*, he went on to observe that Rousseau's hen, the schoolmistress, Madame de Genlis, was said to have arrived in London ; adding that the eggs that both he and she laid would be ready to die of old age.

In a second letter, however, written after he had made the personal acquaintance of the lady, he was compelled, though somewhat grudgingly, to allow that he had found her pleasanter and more natural than he had expected ; while of Pamela he observed sardonically,

finding no doubt what he expected to find, that Madame de Genlis "had educated her to be very like herself in the face."

That visit had been paid in the summer of 1785, It was six years later that, towards the end of 1791, Madame de Genlis and her adopted daughter, this time accompanied by Mademoiselle d'Orleans, again arrived in England, and after some short delay proceeded to Bath, where Mademoiselle had been ordered for the sake of her health.

Madame de Genlis was certain, wherever she might find herself, to utilise to the utmost the resources of the place. During her stay at the fashionable watering-place she combined education with amusement by engaging a box at the local theatre, with the view of perfecting herself and her charges in the use of the English language; and it was doubtless at this time that Southey caught the glimpse of Pamela of which he has given the account.

"They who have seen Pamela," he says, "would think anything interesting that related to her. I once sat next her in the Bath theatre"—he is writing some six years later. "Madame de Sillery"—by which name Madame de Genlis was likewise known—"was on the seat with her; but with physiognomical contrition I confess that, while my recollection of Pamela's uncommon beauty is unimpaired, I cannot retrace a feature of the authoress."

The visit to Bath concluded, the travellers established themselves at Bury, a place frequented by other

French emigrants ; where the household set up by the *gouvernante* is said to have been of singular composition, having attached to it several men of anomalous position, who were alternately treated as equals and as domestics. The vagaries indulged in by the head of the establishment during her residence at this place were also reported to have been such as to attract a degree of criticism which rendered her eventually not unwilling to quit the neighbourhood.

She would seem, however, to have been still located at Bury when, in September, 1792, the Duke of Orleans, for reasons connected with the laws then to be passed with regard to emigrants, wrote to recall his daughter to France. It was probably under these circumstances that her governess, terrified at the prospect of a return to Paris in its present condition of anarchy—a condition attributed in part by the Duc de Liancourt to the unfortunate influence she herself exercised over Orleans—sent a frantic appeal to Charles James Fox for assistance and protection.

To the English statesman she was personally little known, though that one meeting at least had taken place during her present visit to England is clear from an account given by Samuel Rogers of a party at which both Fox and Sheridan were guests, the latter engaged in writing verses, in very imperfect French, to Pamela, who, with her guardian and Mademoiselle d'Orleans, was present.

However limited their intercourse had been, Madame

de Genlis was not a woman to be deterred by the slightness of an acquaintance from turning it to the best account. Her appeal was couched in hysterical terms. Dangers, real or imaginary, had pursued her across the Channel. At all times prone to create around her an atmosphere of romance, her excitable imagination had now become possessed by the idea of a conspiracy to carry off Mademoiselle. She represented herself as environed by peril. Anonymous letters of a threatening nature had reached her, in one of which she was designated as a "savage fury," and her terrors had now attained their climax.

"I am uneasy, sick, unhappy," she told Fox, "and surrounded by the most dreadful snares of the fraud and wickedness!" After which she begged the statesman to pardon her "bad language"—meaning, it is fair to explain, her lack of conversancy with the English tongue; and concluded with entreaties that a man of law might be despatched without delay to her aid.

There was one other person, and one only, so she told Mr. Fox, in whom she placed confidence. That man was Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Whether or not it was at the party already mentioned that Pamela's first introduction to Sheridan took place we have no means of knowing; but some months before Madame de Genlis's letter was written and when his first wife, the beautiful Miss Linley, was still alive, he had drawn so fair a portrait, for her benefit and that of Lord Edward FitzGerald, who



Sir Joshua Reynolds, pinx.

MISS LINLEY (MRS. SHERIDAN) AS ST. CECILIA.

happened to be present, of a young French girl he had lately met, that Mrs. Sheridan, even then in the grasp of the malady which was to prove fatal, turning to the visitor with a melancholy smile, observed, "I should like you, when I am dead, to marry that girl." The girl was Pamela.

Sheridan, in his description, had dwelt upon the likeness he had discovered in the stranger to his own wife in the days of her early bloom. Whether or not that resemblance was to blame for their infidelity, it is a curious coincidence that, within the space of little more than a year, not one but both of her hearers, husband and friend, are said to have laid their hearts at the feet of the girl of whom she spoke.

"When I am dead." The affection of Lord Edward for the beautiful woman, some five or six years older than himself, already marked for death, was only likely to be misinterpreted by a mind such as that of Madame de Genlis, who did not fail to put her own construction upon it. That there should have been mutual admiration, observes Moore, between two such noble specimens of human nature, it is easy, without injury to either, to believe, and he is doubtless right.

Though remaining attached to his wife to the end, the fervour of Sheridan's passion would seem to have cooled before her death. Such at least is the inference to be drawn from a speculation in which he was overheard indulging, as to whether anything could

avail to bring back his first feelings for her, adding that it was possible that result might be produced by a sight of the cottage which had been their first home in common. The anecdote, indulgently cited by his biographer as a proof that love, in the very act of lamenting its own decay, was still alive, nevertheless suggests the reflection that a woman used to worship might excusably find charm in a devotion which had not suffered from the action of time.

Mrs. Sheridan, at any rate, did not long bar the way to other attachments. By June, 1792, she was in her grave, leaving husband and friend alike at liberty to turn their attention elsewhere.

It was in September of the same year that Madame de Genlis's appeal to Mr. Fox was made. What response was elicited from the statesman does not appear ; but Sheridan, to whom he sent on her letter—not impossibly with a shrewd suspicion that the adventure was likely to prove more to the taste of the playwright than to his own—repaired without delay to Madame de Genlis's country retreat, in order to bestow upon her in person his counsel and advice, with the result of the removal, in October, of the whole French party to London.

From that time forward until their departure from England, Sheridan seems to have taken the management of affairs into his own hands. After a brief interval passed at an hotel, Madame de Genlis, still a prey to her fears and further alarmed by the proposal—accompanied, if she is to be credited, by threats of

violence—on the part of an Irish gentleman named Rice to arrange for her safety and that of her charges by their immediate shipment to America or by their removal to his Irish estate, consented to accept Sheridan's proffered hospitality under the roof of a house at Isleworth which, according to Horace Walpole, he had rented from a Mrs. Keppel at a rate of four hundred a year, on being compelled to leave his residence in Bruton Street through inability to satisfy the claims of his landlord. "Almost the first night he came to Isleworth," adds the distinguished gossip, "he gave a ball there, which will not precipitate Mrs. K.'s receipts."

So long as balls or other entertainments more suitable to the condition of the new-made widower were to be enjoyed, Madame de Genlis was not likely to feel an undue amount of solicitude concerning her host's liabilities. A month was passed pleasantly enough at Isleworth—an interval during which the Duc d'Orléans was fuming in vain at Paris over his daughter's delay in yielding obedience to his summons, and the not inconsolable Sheridan was falling so deeply in love that—again on Madame de Genlis's authority—he made Pamela, two days before the date finally fixed upon for the departure of his guests, a formal offer of marriage.

Whether the proposal is to be regarded in the light of a serious one, or whether the whole affair was viewed by the playwright merely as a diverting episode, remains a doubtful question ; nor does his

subsequent conduct serve to elucidate it. Two days after the offer had been made and accepted, the party set out for Dover, on the understanding that Madame de Genlis, after duly placing Mademoiselle in the hands of her father, should return to England with Pamela, and that the marriage should then take place. Apparently, however, more anxious to secure the present companionship of his betrothed than to hasten his permanent possession of her, Sheridan contrived, by means of what, in the opinion of his biographer, was an elaborate practical joke, so to terrify her guardian by the astonishing adventures encountered on the way to the coast that, returning to London, she threw herself once more, with her charges, upon the hospitality of the comedian, to last until such time—it proved to be no less than a month distant—as the claims of business should permit of his giving the travellers his personal escort to the coast. The journey on this second occasion was accomplished in safety ; and, arrived at Dover, a tearful parting took place, Sheridan, according to Madame de Genlis, being prevented by his political duties alone from attending the party to Paris.

Had Mr. Sheridan seriously contemplated making the little French adventuress his wife, he would have done well to disregard the claims of duty. That leave-taking by the sea is the last occasion in which he appears in the character of her affianced husband. Whether the discovery of the unsatisfactory condition of his finances led Madame de Genlis to entertain



J. Russell, pinx.

Photo. by Walker & Cockerell

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

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doubts of the prudence of the arrangement ; whether the young lady herself had already wearied of a lover more than twice her age, Sheridan being above forty, and Pamela not more than either fifteen or nineteen according as we accept her own statement or that of her adopted mother—there exists a discrepancy of no less than four years ; or whether the appearance of a more eligible suitor was sufficient to banish the recollection of poor Sheridan's claims, it is clear that no morbid sense of honour was permitted to darken counsel, or to prove a hindrance to the formation of fresh ties. There is not so much as a mention of the fact of her late host's dismissal ; he simply, so far as Pamela is concerned, disappears from the scene.

As for the dramatist himself, whatever may have been his sentiments towards the pretty little French girl—and one would be loath to believe that he regarded her, by reason of her doubtful origin and dependent position, as fitted to be cast for a leading part in a farce—it does not appear that her infidelity left him inconsolable. Four years later, turning his back upon wandering heroines of romance, he married the daughter of a Dean and the granddaughter of a Bishop, possessed not only of the unsubstantial advantages of youth and beauty, but of the more solid recommendations of four thousand pounds.

Returning to Pamela, one of the series of episodes which make up her history was concluded. Another was promptly to begin, and that the one to which

her interest in the eyes of English readers is chiefly due.¹

¹ It is curious that in Sheridan's latest and fullest biography not only is silence preserved as to this entire episode, but no mention is made of the two months, more or less, spent by the foreign visitors at Isleworth. Whether or not the statements of Madame de Genlis as to the relations between her adopted daughter and Sheridan are allowed to carry weight, that those relations were at least of a nature to attract the attention of London society is plain from a letter written in October, 1792, by Lady Elliot to Lady Malmesbury, in which an assertion is hazarded to the effect that Sheridan "is so much in love with Madame de Genlis's Pamela, that he means to marry her, if she will have him"; while Sir Gilbert Elliot himself later on, after announcing Lord Edward FitzGerald's marriage to "Pamela, Madame de Genlis's daughter," goes on to add that "Sheridan is said to have been refused by her."

CHAPTER IX

1792

Lord Edward in Paris—Spirit of the Revolution—Enthusiasm in England and Ireland—Shared by Lord Edward—Compromising Action on his Part—Meeting with Pamela—The Duc d'Orléans and Madame de Genlis—Marriage of Lord Edward and Pamela—Lord Edward Cashiered.

WHEN Madame de Genlis and her charges at length reached Paris, another visitor had arrived there—a visitor who had already spent some weeks in the French capital, and whose stay was now drawing to an end. This was Lord Edward FitzGerald.

The course of events in France had been watched with intense interest by lookers-on in England, by whom they had been regarded with sentiments ranging from the deepest distrust of the “strange, nameless, wild, and enthusiastic thing” which the Republican Government appeared to Burke, together with horror at the brutalities by which it had already been disfigured, to the most extravagant enthusiasm for what was looked upon as the dawn of an epoch of justice, liberty, and peace.

Among responsible statesmen, the unmeasured admiration that had been entertained by Fox for the

principles which were now achieving their triumph was so well recognised that even after the massacres of September, 1792, his refusal of the proffered honour of French citizenship seems to have caused surprise as well as disappointment to those employed to sound him on the subject. When the Revolution Society hired Ranelagh for the celebration of the anniversary of the French Confederation, it was announced that Sheridan would take part in the proceedings. While, as an instance of the hopes which prevailed at the time among less practical politicians with regard to the new era which had been inaugurated, it may suffice to quote the opinion gravely expressed by so unemotional a philosopher as William Godwin, who asserted his belief that, granted a condition of sufficient liberty—such as that now obtaining in France—the existence of vice would be impossible.

The spirit of the Revolution was essentially a proselytising one. Its emissaries were constantly making their appearance, in London and elsewhere, with the object of spreading abroad the principles upon which it had been based, and of offering sympathy and help to those suffering under injustice and wrong. The disinherited of all nations were at length to be put in possession of that which was theirs by right. The liberty which France had already made her own was to be diffused over the entire face of the earth.

It was a dazzling dream, to which converts were made every day; nor was England slow to respond to the advances she received. Every class which

had, or conceived itself to have, a grievance, looked across the Channel for help ; English revolutionary societies sent deputations to France to offer the congratulations of those they represented at the bar of the Convention. In an address to the latter put forth by a large body of Englishmen, it was declared to be the duty of all true Britons to support and assist the defenders of the Rights of Man and the propagators of human felicity, and to swear inviolable friendship to France, the land which was already what Britons were preparing to become—free. It was hoped to establish a National Convention on the French model ; and, in the words of the President, the festival which had been celebrated in England in honour of the Revolution in France was the prelude to the festival of nations.

It is difficult, now that more than a hundred years has passed since that fever fit of hope and anticipation, to realise the condition of excitement which so widely prevailed. Some of the ideals then first heard of, at least by the crowd, have been partially realised ; some of the principles then enunciated have almost taken their place as unquestioned truisms. And still sin and misery are as rife as ever among us, nor are there any indications that they are likely to cease to exist. The results to be looked for through improvement in political institutions have been modified and corrected by experience. But a century ago it was a different matter. Nothing then appeared to the devotees of the new faith impossible.

The attitude of a large section of English democrats has been described. It was only what was to be expected that in Ireland, where no traditional prejudice with regard to France had to be overcome and where existing grievances were pressing with incomparably greater weight than on the other side of St. George's Channel, enthusiasm should have risen to a still greater height. The absolute religious equality, in particular, which formed a fundamental principle of the Republic, was calculated to appeal with special force to Irish sentiment at a time when adherents of all creeds were to be found combining in a common cause, and when a determination on the part of the national party to sink religious differences and to work together in harmony was finding expression in the formation of that "Plot of Patriots"—the Society of United Irishmen. Although the Established Church maintained its opposition to the popular demands, such an amalgamation of other religious parties had taken place as might well cause disquiet to the Government. A new enthusiasm, according to Grattan, had gone forth in the place of religion, much more adverse to kings than Popery, and infinitely more prevailing—the spirit of Republicanism.

That this spirit should be vehemently enlisted on the side of France, engaged almost single-handed in her struggle with those pledged to the maintenance of ancient rights and customs and privileges, was of course inevitable; nor was Ireland slow to give ex-

pression to her sympathy. On July 14th, 1792, Belfast celebrated, in true Republican fashion, the anniversary of the French Revolution; and at a dinner given a day or two later in honour of the occasion, Catholic and Protestant Dissenter met together in unity and friendship, the four flags of America, France, Poland, and Ireland being displayed, while that of England was conspicuous by its absence.

When such were the feelings called forth by the Revolution amongst the men, both in England and Ireland, whose opinions he shared, it was not to be expected that Lord Edward would remain uninfected by the contagion of the prevailing spirit. Nor was he likely to be content to watch the progress of events from afar.

"Is it not delightful?" he had written to his mother in October, referring to the "good French news"—doubtless the retreat of the allies and the success of the Republican arms. "It is really shameful to see how much it has affected all our *aristocrats*. I think one may fairly say the Duke of Brunswick and his Germans are bedeviled."

Unable to resign himself to remaining at a distance from the centre of interest, by the end of the same month he was making an inspection of French affairs at head-quarters, and writes from Paris, dating his letter the first year of the Republic, to reassure the Duchess as to any possible risk to be incurred in his present surroundings. The town, he tells her, is perfectly quiet, and for him a most interesting

scene, which on no account would he have missed witnessing.

No doubt, from his own point of view, he was seeing Paris under favourable circumstances, for he was lodging in the same house with Thomas Paine, and liked his host better and better.

“The more I see of his interior, the more I like and respect him. I cannot express how kind he is to me. . . . I pass my time very pleasantly—read, walk, and go quietly to the play. I have not been to see any one, nor shall not. I often want you, dearest mother, but I should not have been able to bear Tunbridge for any time. The present scene occupies my thoughts a great deal, and dissipates unpleasant feelings very much.”

Though it may have been true that Lord Edward did not pay visits, it is to be inferred that Mr. Paine’s disciple did not wholly lead the life of a recluse ; since it appears that, a little later on, the popular philosopher found himself so overwhelmed with those who sought his society that he was compelled to set apart two mornings each week for the purpose of holding a species of levee, from which it is not probable that Lord Edward would be absent. Constant visits to the Assembly also alternated with the playgoing ; and there was no fear of time hanging heavy on the hands of the young Englishman.

Not only was his interest in the events that were going forward keen and alert, but his revolutionary sympathies were strangely unaffected by any misgivings

as to the methods of the Republican leaders. There are blanks in all histories—questions to which no answer can be given. It will never be known how to a nature as gentle and as compassionate as that of Lord Edward, it was apparently possible to condone those September butcheries, of whose victims the blood was scarcely dry ; which had been cause of alienation to so many well-wishers of the Revolution, and were allowed by so violent a partisan as Fox—while striving to exonerate the Jacobins from responsibility in the matter—to be crimes incapable of extenuation.

Whatever had been the means by which he had explained and reconciled himself to the past, it seems clear that no recollection of the ghastly scenes enacted in Paris not two months previous to his visit had availed to damp Lord Edward's spirits, to have cast a shadow over his bright and sanguine anticipations with regard to the future, or to have mingled with the hopes to which the proceedings of the Convention were adapted to give birth.

To a man of his nationality and opinions those proceedings were likely enough to appeal with peculiar force. The people that had sat in darkness were seeing a great light, and nowhere was the gloom deeper than in Ireland. What must therefore have been the effect upon an Irishman, having the misery of his country at heart, of the celebrated decree, passed on November 19th, by which the revolutionary Government of France made formal tender of

fraternity and assistance to all nations, without distinction, desirous of regaining their liberty ; directing further the Executive to issue orders to the Generals of the Republic to give effect to the decree.

It was a declaration which, menacing all tyrannies alike, might well have sounded significantly in the ears of an Irishman, kindling within him new hopes for the future of that "most distressful country" he called his own. The action of the Convention was well calculated to dispel any misgivings—were he likely to have entertained such—with which Lord Edward might otherwise have looked back upon certain proceedings in which he had taken a prominent part on the very day before the decree was promulgated.

On that occasion he had come forward, whether on a momentary impulse of reckless enthusiasm or with deliberate intention, to make public confession of his political faith.

"Yesterday"—so ran the announcement in the newspapers of the occurrence which had so grave an influence on Lord Edward's future—"yesterday the English arrived in Paris assembled at White's Hotel [it was there that Paine lodged] to celebrate the triumph of the victories gained over their late invaders by the armies of France. Though the festival was intended to be purely British, the meeting was attended by citizens of various countries, by members of the Convention, by generals and other officers of the armies then stationed at Paris or visiting

it, J. H. Stone in the chair. Among the toasts were, 'The armies of France: may the example of its citizen-soldiers be followed by all enslaved countries, till tyrants and tyrannies be extinct!' . . . Among several toasts proposed by the Citizens Sir R. Smith and Lord Edward Fitzgerald was the following: 'May the patriotic airs of the German Legion (Ça Ira, the Carmagnole, Marseillaise March, etc.) soon become the favourite music of every army, and may the soldier and the citizen join in the chorus!' Sir Robert Smith and Lord E. FitzGerald renounced their titles; and a toast by the former was drunk: 'The speedy abolition of all hereditary titles and feudal distinctions.'"

Thus Lord Edward burnt his boats behind him and finally surrendered himself to the current which was carrying him along. That, though reckless, he was not blind to the possible results of his conduct is clear from a letter to his mother written about this time, announcing his intention of returning to England the following week, when he would settle his majority, *if he were not scratched out of the army*. The possibility, however, does not appear to have weighed on his spirits; and again his admiration for the present condition of French sentiment finds vent.

"I am delighted," he says, "with the manner they feel their success: no foolish boasting or arrogance at it, but imputing all to the greatness and goodness of their cause, and seeming to rejoice

more on account of its effects on Europe in general than for their own individual glory. . . . In the coffee-houses and play-houses every man calls the other *camarade, frère*, and with a stranger immediately begins, '*Ah, nous sommes tous frères, tous hommes, nos victoires sont pour vous, pour tout le monde*,' and the same sentiments are always received with peals of applause. In short, all the good, enthusiastic French sentiments seem to come out ; while, to all appearance, one would say, they had lost all their bad."

Notwithstanding, however, the confidence with which he claims his mother's sympathy for his political interests, it was, one cannot doubt, the characteristic conclusion of the letter that came nearest to the Duchess's heart.

"I long to see you," he wrote, "and shall be with you the beginning of the week after next. I cannot be long from you" ; adding, after the signature, "In the midst of my patriotism and projects, you are always the first thing in my heart, and ever must be, my dear, dear mother."

It was possibly the last time that such an assurance could have been thus worded. Even at that very moment, had the Duchess but known it, there was another competitor—and one she might have considered more formidable than even his patriotism—for the first place in her son's affections. In the letter containing the expression of his unchanging devotion he includes, amongst other items of intelligence, the information that he was that day to dine

with Madame Sillery. It was a fact, thus baldly stated, to which the Duchess was not likely to attach the significance in truth belonging to it, until such time as it should be explained to her, in somewhat startling fashion, by the sequel.

It will be remembered that Madame de Genlis and her two charges, Mademoiselle d'Orléans and Pamela, had taken leave of Sheridan at Dover, the latter returning, that parting over, to London; while the rest of the party were to proceed to Paris with the object of consigning Mademoiselle to her father's care.

Circumstances, however, had occurred during the delay which had taken place in obeying his summons now rendering the Duc d'Orléans as desirous of prolonging his daughter's absence from France as he had previously been anxious to hasten her return. A courier accordingly was despatched who, meeting the travellers at Chantilly, was charged with instructions that, had their departure from England not already taken place, they should remain in that country; and that in any case they should, after receiving the Duke's orders, proceed no farther on their way to Paris.

If, however, the Duke had changed his mind, Madame de Genlis had likewise altered her own; and finding herself so far upon the road, she appears to have determined to deliver Mademoiselle without further delay into the hands of her father, and thus to rid herself of an anxious responsibility and regain her liberty to go where she pleased.

"I paid no attention to this order," she calmly observes, describing the occurrence; proceeding composedly on her way, in defiance of the Duke's injunctions.

At Belle Chasse the party was met by *Egalité* himself, accompanied by M. de Sillery and others; when Mademoiselle, weeping bitterly—it does not appear for what cause—was duly given over to the care of her lawful guardian.

"I told him," Madame de Genlis adds, "that it was with sorrow I gave up this precious charge, that I resigned my position as governess, and that I should set out the next morning for England," taking Pamela, no doubt, with her, with the object of consigning her second charge to the expectant Sheridan, according to the arrangement made with him before her departure from Dover.

It appeared, however, that obstacles existed in the way of the execution of her plan. The age now reached by Mademoiselle, together with the delay in reaching France for which Madame de Genlis had been responsible, had brought her within the operation of the laws recently passed respecting emigrants. Feeling, it is clear, no great confidence in the behaviour, under the circumstances, of his friends the Jacobins, her father was therefore urgent in his desire that the governess should continue, for the present at least, at her post, and that, conducting the girl to some neutral territory, she should remain in charge of her until such time as her name should have been in-

cluded in the list to be drawn up of exceptions to the operation of the new law—a matter he pledged himself to arrange without loss of time.

Refusal on Madame de Genlis's part to comply with his request would have been manifestly impossible. It was accordingly settled—the governess giving her reluctant assent—that the party should start once again on their travels, after a delay of not more than a couple of days,¹ the stipulation being added by the unwilling guardian that should it be found necessary to prolong the absence of her pupil from Paris, a *remplaçante* should be despatched within a fortnight to release her from the duties which—possibly owing to the thoughts of Sheridan and England—had become so suddenly irksome.

In two more days, therefore, Madame de Genlis, with Pamela, would have been at a safe distance from Paris, and the course of Lord Edward's domestic affairs would have been a different one. But much may happen in two days. That same evening M. de Sillery, who seems to have been at the moment assiduous in attendance, had the happy idea of escorting his wife and her charges to the play, in order, as Madame de Genlis explains, to dissipate their

¹ The account given by Tournois, in his *Life of the Duc d'Orléans*, of this episode does not agree in all points with that of Madame de Genlis, the period for which he makes the travellers delay at Paris being, in especial, a fortnight. Whether accurate in this instance or not, his mention of Lord Edward as "*premier pair d'Irlande*," as well as the further assertion that, condemned to death, he committed suicide in prison, does not tend to place his reliability as an authority beyond question (Tournois, Vol. II., p. 296).

melancholy. During this visit to the theatre an incident occurred which appreciably diminished Madame de Genlis's impatience to return to England, and must have been more efficacious than the performance they had gone to witness in distracting the spirits of at least one of the party.

Lord Edward had mentioned to his mother that play-going formed one of his Parisian amusements. Accordingly, on the same night that Madame de Genlis and her pupils were seeking solace and refreshment at the theatre, he had also resorted thither ; and chancing to look up, he was struck by a face in one of the boxes—a face which recalled to him, as it had to poor Sheridan, that of Sheridan's wife, six months dead, and was that of the girl whom she had said she would like him, when she herself should have passed away, to marry.

Lord Edward was apparently in the company of the Englishman, Stone, who had occupied the chair at the meeting of his countrymen in Paris. This gentleman was acquainted with Madame de Genlis. It was probably at his house in England that her meeting with Fox and Sheridan had taken place, and she charged him some years later, truly or falsely, with the embezzlement of certain money she had entrusted to him. At the present moment he was at all events in a position to effect the introduction of his companion to the *loge grillée* in which the fair face was to be found ; and the acquaintance was so successfully inaugurated that by the very next day—so it would

appear—Lord Edward had received and accepted an invitation to dine with Madame de Genlis. Pamela's guardian, to put the matter plainly, had made the most of her flying visit to Paris, and had discovered in Lord Edward FitzGerald a suitor for the hand of her adopted daughter who was more likely to commend himself to her ward than the impecunious and middle-aged lover who had been left behind—in tears or otherwise—at Dover.

The day between the meeting at the theatre and the departure for Tournay, which place had been selected as the destination of the travellers, was spent at Rainsy, in company with the Duke, and, again, the attentive Sillery. The former was in no happy mood ; and absent, impatient and careworn, continued to pace up and down the room ; until, the winter's day being unusually mild, and Pamela, Mademoiselle, and M. de Sillery having discreetly betaken themselves to the garden, he took the opportunity of informing Madame de Genlis that he had declared himself on the side of the Republic ; and, in answer to her protest, silenced his monitress by the remark—not the more courteous when the profession of the lady is taken into account—that, while she might be worth consulting on history or literature, she was certainly not so when it was a question of politics.

An effectual end having thus been put to the discussion of his recent course of action, Madame de Genlis, casting about for a fresh subject of conversation, put the pertinent question why, under the

circumstances, he continued to permit his house to remain decorated by the forbidden emblems of the *fleur-de-lis*? It appeared, however, that this topic was no more happily chosen than the last.

“Because it would be cowardly to take them down,” he returned roughly.

Conversation with a man in the temper in which the Duke then found himself is not easy to carry on, and poor Madame de Genlis adds that, later on, she found M. de Sillery no more ready than the Duke to accept the good advice she was prepared, with a fine impartiality, to administer to him.

All things considered, she did not feel so much regret, one may imagine, at her impending banishment from Paris as she might otherwise have done. At any rate, she made no further delay in obeying the Duke's orders ; and the following morning—the dinner to which Lord Edward had been invited having taken place in the meantime—the travellers set out on their journey to Flanders. The Duke's gloom, it is recorded, was more profound than ever as he took leave of his daughter ; and Mademoiselle, who seems to have been addicted to weeping, was once more in tears.

One member, however, of the party was, we are justified in concluding, no victim to the general dejection ; since at the first stage of the journey Lord Edward FitzGerald joined the travellers, and accompanied them on their way to Tournay.

The sequel may be given in Madame de Genlis's

own language—the language of the woman who, at a later date, had her portrait taken with a copy of the Gospels conspicuously introduced upon a table at her side, that volume having furnished, as she is careful to explain, the basis and foundation for all her own literary productions.

“We arrived at Tournay,” she relates, “during the first days of December of this same year, 1792. Three weeks later I had the happiness of marrying my adopted daughter, the angelical Pamela, to Lord Edward FitzGerald. In the midst of so many misfortunes and injustices, Heaven desired to recompense, by this happy event, the best action of my life—that of having protected helpless innocence, of having brought up and adopted the incomparable child thrown by Providence into my arms; and finally of having developed her intelligence, her reason, and the virtues which render her to-day a pattern wife and mother of her age.”

Thus Madame de Genlis upon the subject of her own good deeds and the success with which they had been attended. Whether the direct interposition of Heaven in the matter of the marriage was equally patent to Lord Edward’s relations may, it is true, be questioned. One may permit oneself a doubt whether, by birth, training, or possibly disposition, Madame de Genlis’s adopted daughter would have been precisely the wife that the Duchess of Leinster would have desired to see bestowed upon her son. But, however that may be, there is no evidence that,

during the short term, five years and a half, of their married life, Lord Edward saw cause to repent of the hazardous experiment upon which he had embarked with such perilous haste. Gentle, affectionate, and, above all things, loyal in every relationship of life, he was not likely to prove less so towards the girl who—like a child caught and carried along in a funeral procession—had been made his wife; and if it is probable that he found in her a companion rather for the sunny hours of life than a comrade in the darker paths he was destined later on to tread, no word of complaint remains to record the fact.

Another change, besides that effected by marriage, had taken place, by this time, in Lord Edward's existence, present and future. When he had arrived in Paris, only a few weeks earlier, he had been, so far as domestic ties were concerned, a free man. He had also held a commission in the British army. When he returned to England, not only was he in possession of a wife, but his name had been struck off the list of English officers. On the ostensible grounds of a subscription to the fund raised to enable the French to carry on the war against their invaders, but more probably owing to the publicity given to those proceedings in Paris of which mention has been made, Lord Edward had been cashiered. On the very day that his marriage was taking place at Tournay, Charles James Fox was lifting his voice in the House of Commons in protest against the action which had been thus taken in depriving

his cousin, as well as two other officers of similar opinions, of their commissions ; and was challenging the Government to show just cause for the severity displayed towards these men, of one of whom, being his own near relation, he would say, from personal knowledge, "that the service did not possess a more zealous, meritorious, and promising member."

The remonstrance was naturally futile. Lord Edward remained—as he himself had foreseen might be the case—scratched out of the army.

CHAPTER X

1792—1793

Pamela and Lord Edward's Family—Her Portrait—Effect upon Lord Edward of Cashierment—Catholic Convention—Scene in Parliament—Catholic Relief Bill—Lawlessness in the Country—Lord Edward's Isolation.

MADAME DE GENLIS has distinctly stated in her account of the marriage that she would by no means have permitted the angelical Pamela—an angel, by the way, cast in very terrestrial mould—to enter the FitzGerald family without the consent of the Duchess of Leinster, giving it to be understood that Lord Edward had gone to England to obtain that consent, and that it was not until his return, successful, that the wedding took place.

Madame de Genlis should be a good authority, but there are, nevertheless, grounds for believing it at least possible that the Duchess's sanction to the arrangement was somewhat belated; and that, like a wise woman, and a mother who wished to retain her son, she had set herself after the event to make the best of the inevitable. Whether her consent was given before or after, it is possible that the recollection of her own second marriage, in which there must have

been an element of romance, strangely associated with the excellent Scotch tutor, and which, in the eyes of the world, must have appeared in the light of a signal triumph of sentiment over sense—it is possible that this, with the added memory of all the good years it had given her, may have inclined her to take a more indulgent view than she might otherwise have done of her son's hasty marriage.

There is, at any rate, no symptom of any interruption in the tender relationship of the mother and son ; and Lord Edward, writing to thank the Duchess for the letter in which she had evidently bestowed her blessing upon the match, told her that she had never made him so happy.

“I cannot tell you,” he added, “how strongly my little wife feels it. . . . You must love her—she wants to be loved.”

There is no doubt that Pamela did want to be loved. It was a want which she felt all her life ; and which, it may be added, she probably took every available means in her power—and they were not few—to satisfy. In the case of women as well as men, though she was not fond of the society of the first, she had an exaggerated desire to please, born of the innate coquetry which, one of her marked features, lasted on even to old age. The Duc de la Force, who had exceptional opportunities of forming a judgment, when asked if, at the age of sixty, she was still a coquette, is said to have answered with a laugh, “More than ever !” adding that when she found

herself deprived, in the solitude of his *château*, of worthier subjects upon which to exert her powers of fascination, she was wont to exercise them upon the gardener.

And her powers of fascination were beyond question great. Even when nearer fifty than forty we hear of her, dressed in white muslin and garlanded with roses, dancing at a ball and ensnaring the heart of an English lad of less than half her years. And if such was her charm at an age when most women resign themselves to be lookers-on at life, what must it have been in the spring-time of her youth? Lord Edward, whatever may be thought of her in other respects, had married a charming wife—upon this head at least there cannot be two opinions. Years afterwards, when he had long been in his grave, and Pamela, a poor little waif on the waves of life, had been washed to and fro at their will, a candid friend, giving an account of her, and including in the description no shortened list of her faults and failings, nevertheless concluded with the acknowledgment that she was, in spite of all, irresistible.

As one reads this lady's account in the light of the facts which are known to us, one acquires a clear enough picture of the fair little figure, with the face which so took the fancy of Robert Southey that, lover of letters as he was, he forgot the authoress at her side; with her eyes of *brun-vert*, her pretty brows and dazzling complexion, the mouth the worst feature in the face and spoilt by a habit of biting her lips;



G. Romney, pinx.

PAMELA.

capricious and variable, assuming by turns the character of a lady of rank, an artist of mediocre talent, a good and graceful child ; brilliant, vain, gentle and quarrelsome ; recklessly generous as to money ; easily amused, yet subject to fits of melancholy ; slight, *légère*, yet always charming,—such was the child of the French sailor and the Canadian mother, and the daughter-in-law presented to the Duchess of Leinster by Lord Edward.

Noblesse oblige. Whatever may have been her secret sentiments as to her son's choice, his mother would seem to have kept them to herself, and not to have taken the world into her confidence. But the situation must have been a difficult one for all parties ; though, during Lord Edward's lifetime at least, those concerned seem to have come well out of it. Lady Sarah Napier in particular—who had perhaps the fellow-feeling for her new niece which, despite the common belief to the contrary, one woman of exceptional beauty sometimes entertains for another—testified a marked admiration and liking for her nephew's wife.

“I never saw such a sweet, little, engaging, bewitching creature as Lady Edward is,” she wrote a few weeks after the marriage, “and childish to a degree with the greatest sense. . . . I am *sure* she is not *vile Egalité's* child ; it's impossible.”

In the first freshness of her grief after the final catastrophe, the Duchess also expressed herself in the warmest terms with regard to the “dear little interesting Pamela, who must ever be an object dear, precious,

and sacred to all our hearts," adding that she was a charming creature, and the more her real character was known, the more it was esteemed and loved; "but even were she not so, *he* adored her: *he* is *gone*! This is an indissoluble chain that must ever bind her to our hearts."

It is probably the last sentence which gives the key to the rest. But it is not only in the case of Pamela that the links of such indissoluble chains have fallen asunder under the inexorable action of time. After her first few months of widowhood Pamela and her husband's family would seem to have little to do with one another; the incongruous elements brought together by accident had once more parted.

In Ireland itself and in Dublin society Pamela was never popular; a fact to which Lady Sarah Napier is found adverting in a letter written from Ireland shortly after her nephew's death to her brother the Duke of Richmond, who had given shelter to the new-made widow at Goodwood, and whose kindness—of which his sister is warmly sensible—is reported, though on doubtful authority, to have gone so far as, later on, to have included an offer of marriage. It is probable enough, for the rest, that the misliking was mutual; and it is certain that when at liberty to choose her own place of abode, Pamela displayed no disposition to fix it in her husband's country.

For the present, however, her home was to be there; and after a visit of three weeks to the Duchess in England, the two proceeded to Dublin, whither

Lord Edward was recalled by his Parliamentary duties.

The companion with whom he had provided himself will no doubt have done much on this occasion to reconcile him to the necessary absence from his family ; and there is a pleasant glimpse to be caught of him about this time, driving his wife through the streets of Dublin in a high phaeton, she beautiful, he retaining his boyish looks, wearing a green silk handkerchief, and frankly delighted with the reception accorded by the people to himself and his bride.

On other occasions it is narrated by a contemporary that, retaining something of boyhood besides his looks, he discarded, in honour of the principles of the Revolution, every symptom of superiority in point of dress ; and even went so far as to take his wife, however wet and muddy the weather, through the streets on foot, rather than indulge in the luxury of a carriage. Whether or not Pamela altogether approved of this object-lesson in equality does not transpire ; one would, however, imagine that the method of propitiating public sentiment to which Madame de Genlis had had recourse, in sending her beautiful foster-daughter to drive through Paris with the popular Orleans liveries, would have been more to her taste.

Lord Edward, in attention to details such as these, displays the enthusiasm of a proselyte. He was, in truth, rehearsing a fresh part. It was one, partly at least, thrust upon him by the English

Government. In a sorrowful review of the past, his mother was accustomed in later days to date the misfortunes by which he was overtaken from his summary dismissal from the army, declaring that that event had left a deep and indelible impression on his mind, and that a sentence of death, to a man of his spirit, would have been in comparison an act of mercy. Yet, while holding this as her own view, and possibly finding consolation in thus ascribing to others the responsibility for the disasters which had followed, she was just enough to add that he had never himself admitted that the action of the Government had exercised any influence upon his conduct.

Looking at the matter impartially, it is possible that both were in a measure right. The step taken by the authorities—perfectly justifiable under the circumstances and from their point of view—while in no way affecting his convictions, may, likely enough, have burnt in upon him the importance of principles originally perhaps adopted after a light-hearted and boyish fashion, and of which the full logical significance might have escaped him had not his attention been directed to it by the course pursued by a Government whose special creative talent appeared to lie in making rebels. By this means the creed which might otherwise have remained—as how many creeds do—a sleeping partner in the business of life was transformed into a practical, working faith, dictating his conduct and ruling his actions. We are apt to prize a possession by what it has cost us.

He had been proud of his profession, and to find himself suddenly thrust out of it would naturally accentuate the importance of the cause in which it had been forfeited.

Had he been disposed to overlook that importance, affairs in Ireland were not likely to allow him to do so. Much had taken place there whilst he had been engaged abroad in getting himself cashiered and married ; and amongst the most notable events of the past months had been the meeting of the Catholic Convention in Dublin.

The summoning of an assembly to consist of delegates from all parts of the country, had not only marked a fresh departure on the part of the Catholic population, a new stage in their agitation, and a strengthened determination to push their claims, but had also been the signal for an outburst of that smouldering religious animosity on the part of the dominant faction which it was always the interest of the Government to keep alive.

The Presbyterians of the north remained indeed undismayed and staunch to their new alliance with the Catholics ; and the United Irishmen only abstained from sending a deputation to the Convention because such a proceeding was judged inexpedient by those who were responsible for its management ; but the partisans of the Protestant Establishment and the upholders of religious and political monopoly took fright at once. Meetings were held in various parts of the country, at which violent language was used,

pledging the speakers to maintain, against no matter what authority, a Protestant King, a Protestant Parliament, a Protestant hierarchy, and Protestant electors and government, in connection with the Protestant realm of England.

The public excitement was sedulously fostered and encouraged by Government ; and, according to Richard Burke, every calumny which bigotry and civil war had engendered in former ages was studiously revived by those in authority. Whether or not the state of public sentiment was, purposely or otherwise, exaggerated by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Westmorland, himself an uncompromising opponent of the Catholic claims, in the accounts forwarded by him to England, there can be no doubt that considerable alarm actually did prevail in the country. The virulence of the hostility displayed towards the Catholics is the more remarkable owing to the fact that there had been, up to this time, a singular absence of disaffection on their part, together with, so far as the priesthood and upper classes were concerned, a distaste for the principles of the Revolution presenting a marked contrast to the enthusiasm excited by it in other quarters.

On December 3rd the Catholic Convention had met ; nor had it lost any time in proceeding to business. The petition presented by the Catholics to the Irish Parliament during the preceding session had been allowed to lie upon the table and had then been rejected. In the case of that now drawn up, setting forth the grievances of the Catholic population and

commending to the King the consideration of their situation, the step was taken of ignoring the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish Government—their recognised foes—and of sending their petition by the hands of delegates of their own to head-quarters.

With the Protestant Wolfe Tone acting as secretary, the five chosen delegates proceeded to execute their mission, receiving an ovation at Belfast on their way, and delivering the petition to the King in person, by whom it was graciously received. When Parliament reassembled in January, 1793, it was found that a marked change had taken place in the tone adopted by the Government, the spirit of conciliation which was at once apparent being due partly, no doubt, to the recent French victories, but partly to the condition of Ireland itself.

Side by side with the agitation for Catholic enfranchisement had gone a demand for the reform of a Parliament in which, out of three hundred members, one hundred and ten were either placemen or pensioners, and of a system of Government characterised by Grattan as “a rank and vile and simple and absolute Government, rendered so by means that make every part of it vicious and abominable.”

A new military movement had been initiated, and a National Guard on the French pattern had been organised in Dublin by the popular leaders, bearing as its emblem the harp, surmounted, in place of the crown, by the cap of liberty—a defiance much regretted by Grattan. It was, however, no longer in the power

of the Whig Parliamentary party to direct the agitation or to fix its limits. The Volunteers, too, had passed beyond the control of Lord Charlemont, still their nominal chief. They not only declined to perform their annual parade at the statue of William III., but discarded their orange badges, and even in some cases replaced them by the national green.

In connection with this new "National Battalion" occurred a scene too characteristic of the chief actor in it to be omitted here; more than a suspicion of laughter running through what was, nevertheless, to him as to others, a serious matter.

Notwithstanding the hopes which the opening proceedings of Parliament had been calculated to inspire, the House had scarcely been sitting three weeks before Lord Edward had occasion to make the protest which has been always remembered by his countrymen.

In the month of December the newly organised military body had issued summons to its members to meet and parade; but on the day preceding that on which the demonstration was to have taken place, a proclamation of the Government forbade it. It was upon a motion, taking the shape of an address to the Lord Lieutenant, approving of this proclamation and intended to extend the prohibition it had contained to other meetings of a like character, that Lord Edward stood up, not only in opposition to the Government, but to many members of his own party, including Grattan, to give "his most hearty disapprobation" to the proposed address; "for I

do think," he added, " that the Lord Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects the King has."

So far the incident rests upon the authority of the Parliamentary record. At this stage, however, the House was cleared, remaining so for the space of three hours ; during which time, if rumour is to be believed, the only apology which was elicited from the delinquent was framed in terms so ambiguous as, not unnaturally, to leave the offended dignity of the assembly unsatisfied.

" I am accused," the culprit is reported to have said, "of having declared that I think the Lord Lieutenant and the majority of this House the worst subjects the King has. I said so, 'tis true, and I'm sorry for it."

On the following day, again summoned to the Bar, he appears to have made some less equivocal excuse ; and, though with a dissenting minority of fifty-five, the explanation was accepted.

Three or four days later the Catholic Relief Bill, in accordance with the new English policy, was introduced ; the Irish ministers being compelled by the London authorities to give their unwilling support to a measure directly opposed to all the articles of their political faith.

The situation had changed with strange rapidity. Only the previous year the petition presented by the Catholics had been unconditionally rejected by the Irish Parliament. Now, in little more than five weeks, the present Bill had practically passed. In the month of April it received the royal assent ; Catholics were

admitted to the franchise on equal terms with their Protestant fellow-subjects, and were relieved of most of the disabilities under which they had hitherto laboured.

Yet it was, in fact, but a very incomplete measure of reform. By their continued exclusion from Parliament, the educated and wealthy among the Catholics were denied participation in the redress accorded to the grievances of the poorer and more ignorant classes ; and the foundation was laid for the long period of agitation and discontent which was to precede complete emancipation. How far the more acute of the party of which Wolfe Tone was one of the ruling spirits were from feeling satisfied with the concessions obtained can be read in Tone's own words. In his opinion the Bill had the radical and fundamental defect that it perpetuated distinctions and, in consequence, disunion. "While a single fibre of the old penal code, that cancer in the bosom of the country, is permitted to exist, the mischief is but suspended, not removed, the principle of contamination remains behind and propagates itself. Palliations may, for a time, keep the disease at bay, but a sound and firm constitution can only be restored by total extirpation."

As far as it went, however, the Bill was a signal triumph to the popular party, and was regarded as such, alike by the Ulster Presbyterians and by those who more immediately profited by its provisions. The Catholic Convention was dissolved, with a parting

exhortation to all Catholics to unite with Protestants on the question, still almost untouched, of Parliamentary reform, and general satisfaction prevailed. It was, nevertheless, a fact significant of the consciousness on the part of the victors that the concessions granted had been the result of necessity rather than due to any more generous motive, that an address of gratitude, effusive and cringing in tone, which had been clandestinely prepared and secretly presented by the Catholic Bishops, was so offensive to their flocks that it is said that their action put an end for the time to all confidence between the hierarchy and the laity.

The boon to the Catholics, from whatever motives, had been granted. One sop had been thrown to the wolves who were threatening the Government car. But in the direction of reform it was soon evident that no step was to be taken. A change had come over the condition of public affairs since the meeting of Parliament. War had been declared with France ; and the revulsion of popular feeling in England which had followed upon the revolutionary excesses on the other side of the Channel had been marked and extreme. Public sentiment in London was strongly excited by the execution of Louis XVI., upon which Wolfe Tone made his significant comment, "I am sorry it was necessary." The theatres were closed, the mob clamoured for war, and mourning was worn by the entire population, including, with a single exception, the whole House of Commons. All this, together with the condition of Ireland itself, had emboldened

the Government to abandon much of the tone of conciliation they had been driven to adopt, and to introduce fresh and stringent measures of coercion.

The Irish ministers were, as was to be expected, ready and eager instruments in putting into force the change of policy on the part of their masters at home, and even among members of the Opposition there was little disposition to stand out against the measures proposed. While leaving the real question of substantial reform untouched, certain other concessions had been granted, with regard to the pension list, hereditary revenue, and placemen in Parliament; and the confidence engendered by the late attitude adopted by the Government combined with anti-revolutionary spirit, strong amongst all parties in the House, to minimise the opposition to the present coercive measures.

Besides the reasons enumerated, the lawlessness which was gaining ground in some parts of the country was calculated to alarm the National party itself. With the decline of the Volunteer movement there had taken place a revival of the traditional feud between the Catholics and Protestants of the North. In the county of Armagh especially this hostility had developed into a species of petty warfare, carried on between the Peep-o'-Day Boys on the one side, and the Catholic peasantry, banded together under the name of Defenders, on the other. These last organisations had, moreover, rapidly spread to other districts, where, in the absence

of their Protestant foes, they assumed the character of a Catholic peasant association designed to enforce the redress of certain practical grievances, notably that of tithes, and plainly looking to violence as the surest means of attaining their object. Constitutional methods of agitation were fast going out of fashion.

It was with the state of things thus summarised that the Government was setting itself to cope by means of enactments of increasing severity. In his resistance to these bills it not unfrequently chanced that Lord Edward, the solitary representative within the House of the opinions which prevailed so widely outside its walls, stood nearly alone. Thus it was almost single-handed that he opposed the Gunpowder Bill, a measure chiefly directed against the Volunteers ; while with regard to the Convention Act, another coercive measure, he formed, this time associated with Mr. Grattan, one of a minority of twenty-seven.

To a man of Lord Edward's temper, with nothing about it of the assertive arrogance or noisy self-sufficiency of the vulgar demagogue bidding for the suffrages of the crowd, there must have been no little pain in the sense of isolation, not only from his natural associates, but from those with whom he had at other times acted, whose devotion to Ireland and to her cause was as true and loyal as his own. Yet what real community of sentiment could exist between the man whose sympathies were more and more passionately engaged on the side of liberty—liberty as interpreted by the Revolution and

its principles—whose only hope for his country was becoming gradually connected with the idea of separation, and to whom England was more and more an alien and tyrannical power, to be resisted if needs be by force,—what cordiality or union could there be between such a man as this and statesmen like Grattan, who, in January, 1794, while declining to enter into the causes of the war which England was carrying on against the propagators of those very revolutionary principles, professed himself to have only one view on the subject—namely, that Ireland should be guided by a fixed, steady, and unalterable resolution to stand or fall with Great Britain ?

CHAPTER XI

1793—1794

Social Position affected by Political Differences—Married Life
—Pamela's Apparent Ignorance of Politics—Choice of a
Home—Gardening—Birth of a Son—Letters to the
Duchess of Leinster—Forecasts of the Future.

IT was not in the field of politics alone that the dividing line which separated Lord Edward from his surroundings was widening.

“My differing so very much in opinion,” he wrote to his mother, “with the people that one is unavoidably obliged to live with here does not add much, as you may guess, to the agreeableness of Dublin society. But I have followed my dear mother’s advice, and do not talk much on the subject, and when I do, am very cool. It certainly is the best way; but all my prudence does not hinder all sorts of stories being made about both my wife and me, some of which, I am afraid, have frightened you, dearest mother. It is hard that when, with a wish to avoid disputing, one sees and talks only to a few people, of one’s own way of thinking, we are at once all set down as a nest of traitors. From what you know of me you may guess that all this has not much changed my opinions; but

I keep very quiet, do not go out much, except to see my wife dance, and—in short, keep my breath to cool my porridge.”

With his family, indeed, the cordiality of his relations remained unimpaired. Of his brother the Duke, who, since his temporary aberration, had continued staunch to the more moderate section of the National party, he went so far as to say—with a touch of fraternal partiality—that he was the only man among the leaders of the Opposition who seemed fair and honest and not frightened; adding, however, that as he was not supported by the rest of his party, and did not approve of their ways of thinking, the Duke intended to keep quiet and out of the business. For his aunt's husband, Mr. Conolly, he entertained an indulgent and tolerant affection. “Conolly,” he observed, “is the same as usual—both ways; but determined not to support Government. . . . He concludes all his speeches by cursing Presbyterians. He means well and honestly, dear fellow, but his line of proceeding is wrong.”

During the first year or two of his marriage even his family, however, always counting for much in his life, must have been of secondary importance; and politics, though a disquieting element always present in the background, had no power to overshadow the brightness of his home life. There is an indescribable atmosphere of freshness and youth and gaiety about the account he gives of that home to his mother. It is like an idyll of peace and sunshine, to

which the catastrophe which was to close it—now so near at hand—lends a poignant touch of pathos.

Lord Edward, it is probable enough, was one of those men who, from one cause or another, keep their public and private lives in great measure apart; nor was a little fair-weather sailor like Pamela the confidant to whom he would be disposed to point out the chances of the gathering storm. Life had not been without its discipline, gently as he had met it, and his dissociation in point of views from those he loved best would have already taught him the lesson of silence where opinions clashed. Even with regard to his mother he was gradually learning to be reticent as to what it might trouble her to know. "I won't bore you any more with politics," he says in one of his letters, "as I know you don't like them." The Duchess, as well she might, was probably growing less and less fond of them; and in Pamela's case, incapable of reflection as Madame de Genlis allowed her to be, the very lightness of her character, not without its charm to a man of Lord Edward's temperament, would have facilitated the separation of public and domestic interests. Political women were rare at the time, at least in Ireland, and he was not likely to desire that his wife should be one of them.

It is true that a description given by a man personally acquainted with the FitzGerald¹ in the darker days which were approaching conveys a different impression. Ireland, according to this account, was

¹ See Teeling's *Personal Narrative*.

Pamela's constant theme, and her husband's glory the darling object of her ambition ; whilst, when anxiety for his safety got the upper hand, she would entreat, in her sweet foreign voice and broken English, his friends to take care of him. "You are all good Irish," she would tell them on these occasions, "Irish are all good and brave ; and Edward is Irish—your Edward and my Edward."

It may be true that when the crisis was obviously at hand, when he was committed beyond recall to the perilous course he was pursuing, and when the danger attaching to it could no longer be ignored, she ceased to avoid a subject which could not but for the time throw all others into the shade. It would have been strange if, devoted to her husband as there is no reason to doubt that she was, it should have been otherwise. But from her own account, given at an earlier date, it is no less clear that while the avoidance of them was possible, she preferred to keep herself apart from politics ; electing, with a shrewd instinct of prudence which does more credit to her head than to her heart, to remain in ignorance of the schemes in which her husband was implicated.

"I perceived," says Madame de Genlis, describing her meeting with the FitzGeralds at Hamburg some three and a half years after their marriage—"I perceived that Lord Edward had imbibed very exaggerated views concerning political liberty, and was very hostile to his own Government. I was afraid that he was embarking in hazardous enterprises, and spoke to

Pamela to advise her to use her influence over him to dissuade him from them, when she made me an answer worthy of remembrance. She told me that she had resolved never to ask him a single question relative to his affairs, for two different reasons: first, because she would have no influence over him upon such a subject; and secondly, in order that if his enterprises were unfortunate, and she were examined before a court of justice, she might be able to swear on the Gospel that she knew nothing about his affairs, and would therefore be exposed to neither of the shocking alternatives of bearing witness against him or of swearing a false oath."

Men marry for different reasons. If it may be doubted whether Lord Edward had gained, in his wife, a comrade for the more serious business of life, he had at least acquired a charming playmate for its lighter hours; nor does the record of the halcyon days which followed their marriage contain any indication of a sense on his part of anything lacking.

The first question by which they had been confronted on their arrival in Ireland was the choice of a home. On Lord Edward's own small estate, Kilrush, there appears to have been no available house; and until the difficult matter of the selection of a permanent residence should be settled, their time was divided between Dublin and Frescati, now vacated by the Duchess of Leinster. Of this place, so long her home, it appears that Lord Westmorland had

entertained the idea of becoming the tenant ; since a year later Lord Edward, who had, as he expressed it, got an under-gardener to help Tim—the said under-gardener being himself—gave up his labours in disgust, reflecting that they would only benefit “that vile Lord W., and the aide-de-camps, chaplains, and all such followers of a Lord Lieutenant.”

For a year, however, Frescati continued to be available as a place of resort whenever Dublin or Dublin society proved wearisome. Lord Edward and his wife were meantime weighing the rival merits of the various residences which were competing for the honour of becoming their permanent home.

A small house in the county of Wicklow, in the midst of beautiful country, and offering the advantages of trees and sea and rocks, presented at first most attractions. But alternatives were not wanting. Leinster Lodge was at their service ; and Mr. Conolly, to whose trimming policy Lord Edward had adverted, was desirous of presenting a small house possessed by him at Kildare, ready furnished for use, to his wife's favourite nephew.

Lord Edward, hesitating to accept a gift of such magnitude, also confessed that Wicklow offered other advantages beside those of beauty over either Kildare or Leinster Lodge.

“I own,” he said impatiently, “I like *not* to be Lord Edward FitzGerald, ‘the County of Kildare member,’—to be bored with ‘this one is your brother's friend,’ ‘That man voted against him.’

I am a little ashamed when I reason and say to myself Leinster Lodge would be the most profitable. Ninety persons out of a hundred would choose it, and be delighted to get it. It is, to be sure, in a good country ; plentiful, affords everything a person wants ; but I *do* like mountains and rocks, and pretty views and pretty hedges and pretty cabins—ay, and a pleasanter people.”

It was more than a year before it was finally decided to accept Mr. Conolly's offer of Kildare Lodge, and in the meantime life went on pleasantly at Frescati. There was no time for writing letters, so he tells his mother ; it was all occupied by talk, and the day was over before they knew where they were. Pamela had taken a fit of growing—was she, after all, right, and Madame de Genlis wrong, and had Lord Edward married a wife of fifteen ? She dressed flower-pots besides, and worked at her frame, while the birds sang and the windows stood open and the house was full of the scent of flowers, and Lord Edward sat in the bay window writing to his dearest mother, with her last dear letter to his wife before him, “so you may guess how I love you at this moment.”

Picture after picture gives the same description of the life that went on at quiet Frescati, as if no such things as politics and fierce clashing passions existed.

“I am amusing myself dressing the little beds about the house. . . . The little mound of earth that is round the bays and myrtle before the house I have planted with tufts of gentianellas and primroses and

lily of the valley, and they look beautiful, peeping out of the dark evergreen: close to the root of the great elm I have put a patch of lily of the valley."

So the letter proceeds, with the trivial details that go to complete the picture, and the fond personalities of perfect familiarity. There is to be a meeting at Malvern soon, but not yet, and a sketch of the Duchess herself is introduced, tenderly touched in. He wants to be with her, but particularly in the country. "I long for a little walk with you, leaning on me, or to have a long talk with you, sitting out in some pretty spot, of a fine day, with your long cane in your hand, working at some little weed at your feet, and looking down, talking all the time. I won't go on in this way, for I should want to set out directly, and that cannot be." So it goes on, till love from "the dear little pale pretty wife" (Pamela had not been well), ends the letter of the future leader of a conspiracy which might, but for his death—such is the opinion of one well qualified to pronounce upon the subject¹—have involved the greater part of Ireland in bloodshed. Close upon thirty as he was, he was still a boy at heart, with not a little of the winning grace of childhood, the childhood that to some favoured natures adheres through life, clinging round him.

It was not till the summer of 1794 that the household was finally established in the cottage given by Mr. Conolly. It was in every way conveniently

¹ W. E. H. Lecky.



J. J. Bonnet Del.

LEINSTER HOUSE.

T. Milton, Sculp.

situated, within easy distance of Dublin, and not more than six miles from Lord Edward's own estate, across the Curragh—a vicinity which had perhaps suggested to him the plan he entertained of turning farmer on his own land, though not on so large a scale that business should oblige him to remain too long absent from his mother. The small dimensions of the house was another of its advantages in his eyes—he liked a small place so much better than a large one. Altogether his satisfaction in his new acquisition seems to have been complete ; and writing to the Duchess in the middle of the business of settling in, and describing the house in detail, he tells her that he feels “pleasant, contented, and happy, and all these feelings and sights never come across me without bringing my dearest mother to my heart's recollection.”

Pamela, for her part, is already planting sweet peas and mignonette ; and some tiny caps are lying, with her workbox, on the table—preparations for the “little young plant that is coming.”

Lord Edward's eldest son, the son he was never to see grow up, was born in Dublin in the autumn of 1794. It had been decided to migrate to Leinster House for the event—the FitzGeralds seem, as a family, to have had their homes much in common—but it was not without regret that Kildare Lodge had been temporarily abandoned. To Lord Edward's mind his brother's great house was melancholy in comparison, and the country housemaid cried for two days when brought there, and thought herself in a prison.

The baby's arrival brightened the aspect of affairs, and its father was evidently delighted with his new possession. Little Edward Fox was a success in every way. He had Pamela's chin and his father's mouth and nose, and blue eyes that were like nobody else's. At present it was indeed difficult to form any opinion of them, as they were seldom open. He was, at all events, everything that could be wished, and was to have for sponsors his grandmother, his uncle the Duke, and his cousin and namesake, Fox.

Kildare Lodge, too, was rapidly improving. "I think," wrote Lord Edward, "I shall pass a delightful winter there. . . . I have paled in my little flower garden before my hall door, and stuck it full of roses, sweetbrier, honeysuckle, and Spanish broom. I have got all my beds ready for my flowers, so you may guess how I long to be down to plant them. The little fellow will be a great addition to the party. I think, when I am down there with Pam and child, of a blustery evening, with a good turf fire and a pleasant book—coming in, after seeing my poultry put up, my garden settled, flower beds and plants covered for fear of frost—the place looking comfortable and taken care of, I shall be as happy as possible ; and sure I am I shall regret nothing but not being nearer my dearest mother, and her not being of the party."

The realisation of this forecast of a home full of happiness and serene content was destined to be but of short duration.

CHAPTER XII

1794—1795

Failing Faith in Constitutional Methods of Redress—Lord Edward's Relations with the Popular Leaders—His Qualifications for Leadership—Jackson's Career and Death—Ministerial Changes—Lord Fitzwilliam's Viceroyalty—And Recall—Lord Camden succeeds Him—Arthur O'Connor.

WHATEVER may have been the case with regard to his wife, it was impossible but that the subject of politics, occupying so large a space in his life and one of growing importance, should have found at times its way into Lord Edward's letters to his mother. A life-long habit of confidence is not lightly broken; and though silence on a topic which must have been an ever more disturbing one to the Duchess may have been gradually facilitated by the increasing infrequency of meetings between mother and son, his allusions to the future, if vague, were not without significance.

In spite of the rumours which began to circulate during the summer of 1794 as to the change likely to be effected in Ireland by the proposed coalition of the Duke of Portland and the more moderate Whigs

with the Tory ministry, it is evident that Lord Edward entertained little hope of substantial benefit to Ireland to be obtained from any English party. He was anxious that, in any case, his brother should keep clear of the Castle. But one thing at least was now certain—that, whatever might be the course the Duke saw fit to pursue, the views formerly entertained by Lord Edward with regard to his own duty, as occupying the position of his brother's Parliamentary nominee, had undergone a radical change.

“When I see Leinster,” he wrote to his mother, “I shall soon find how the wind sets in his quarter. I trust, though, he will be stout, and have nothing to say to any of them. I know if he goes over, I shall *not* go with him; for my obstinacy or perseverance grows stronger every day, and all the events that have passed, and are passing, but convince me more and more that these two countries must see very strong changes, and *cannot* come to good unless they do.”

It was evident that repeated disappointments had done their work with him, as with the nation at large. His lingering faith in the efficacy of constitutional methods of obtaining redress for the grievances of the Irish people was dying out during the months divided between the more satisfactory occupation of cultivating his flowers and that of making passionate and futile endeavours in Parliament to stand between the people and the governmental system of oppression.

As early as January, 1794, signs were apparent of the possibility of his deciding to absent himself

from debates in which his sole part could be to raise an impotent protest against a policy equally abhorrent to him whether in its foreign or domestic aspect ; and although it was not until more than two years later that he finally determined to give up Parliament and associated himself definitely with the United Irishmen, there can be no doubt that his opinions, during the interval, were steadily approximating themselves both to the views held by that organisation and to the methods it advocated ; while his sympathies had long been engaged on the side of the struggle of which it was representative.

With regard to the date of the commencement of a personal or intimate connection on his part with the leaders of the advanced National party, it is difficult to form any definite conclusion. The slightness of his acquaintance with so prominent a member of the United Irish Association as Wolfe Tone, who remained in Ireland until May, 1795, would seem to give a direct denial to the existence of any close intercourse before that date with the chiefs of the organisation. At the same time, the fact that a French emissary, sent over in the year 1793, after war had been declared with England, for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the popular Irish leaders and proffering French aid towards the furtherance of their objects, presented a letter of introduction to Lord Edward, and was by him made known to certain prominent members of the party, goes to prove that he was on confidential and trusted terms with the men who were

ready, if necessary, to resort to physical force. It also implies that he himself, if not yet prepared to take an active share in the extreme step of entering upon an alliance with the enemies of England, was known to be not definitely opposed to such a policy.

Such being the case, it is a curious fact, and one which seems to call for explanation, that whilst more and more driven into the camp of the irreconcilables, so far as views, opinions, and sympathies were concerned, he was so tardy in identifying himself with its personal representatives.

Irrelevant circumstances have often more to do with such matters than is commonly imagined. The United Irish movement had been an eminently middle-class one. Tone was the son of a coach-builder, Emmet (who had, however, not yet become a member of the association) of a doctor, the father of the two Sheares was a banker at Cork, Neilson's a dissenting minister, Bond was a woollen draper. It was inevitable that between these men and Lord Edward there should have been wanting the starting-point of natural social intercourse, and that a certain distance, especially in days when differences of birth and position counted for far more than at present, should have separated him from them, until such time as the fusing action of a supreme and absorbing common interest obliterated all adventitious lines of division. When that day came, nothing is more remarkable than the absence of any trace of jealousy on the part of the earlier leaders of the movement with regard to

the man who was then placed at the head of the enterprise.

Lord Edward has been called a weak man. In some respects the charge may not be wholly unfounded. But in estimating his character, it should be borne in mind that in his adoption of the national cause, not as it was understood by Grattan and his friends, not as it was understood by the brother he loved and respected, or by the mother he adored, but as it was understood by men to whom he was bound by nothing but a common pity for the wronged and the oppressed, and a common enthusiasm for the rights of a nation whose grievances were crying for redress, he acted, so far as party, family, and class were concerned, almost alone. Singly he defied their traditions and identified himself with a cause in which he had everything to lose and nothing to gain. And to choose such a course of action and to carry it through with consistent loyalty is not altogether the act of a weak man.

Of force of intellect, or of that strength of will which consists in deciding, calmly and dispassionately, after a review of all contingencies and with a full appreciation of all side issues and each possible result, upon the course to be pursued and in steadily adhering to the decision thus reached, he had probably but little. But a strength of his own he did possess—the strength that belongs to a great simplicity and to a perfect rectitude, to a single-minded purpose, to a disregard of side issues and a

total absence of that taint of self-interest which is so fruitful a source of vacillation, to a delicate sense of honour and of the value of a pledge, to an absolute loyalty and an unflinching courage. His judgment might and did fail; he trusted and he was betrayed; his estimates of character were unreliable; he was undeniably most unsuited for the task which was set him of conducting a conspiracy to a successful end. But there are different qualities, each possessing in warfare a value of its own. It is said that towards the close of the American Civil War, when it had lasted over four years, the veterans of the army, whilst they had become past masters of most of the branches of the art of fighting, had lost one accomplishment. They had grown so adroit in availing themselves of every shred of cover, that they had lost the power of charging; with the result that at Gettisburg a body of raw recruits made a gallant onslaught while the seasoned soldiers remained in the background. It was the courage of the recruit which was, to the end, that of Lord Edward. The misfortune was that the equipment of the private in the ranks and of the general ought not to be the same, and that the gallantry of the recruit is not the wisdom of the commander-in-chief.

Again, if he was weak, his was not the weakness which sacrifices a duty or a conviction, knowingly, any more to affection than to fear. Pamela, as we have seen, confessed that in the matter of his public career her influence counted for nothing. Nor had

his mother power to withdraw him from the dangerous course upon which he had embarked. But his nature was gentle and yielding to an uncommon degree, and it was admitted by one who knew and loved him¹ that he might be led to concede his own judgment to inferior counsels.

“The only measure,” adds the same writer, “which perhaps he was ever known to combat with the most immovable firmness, in spite of every remonstrance and the kindest solicitude on the part of his friends, was on the expected approach of an awful event, when failure was ruin and success more than doubtful. ‘No, gentlemen,’ said he; ‘the post is mine, and no man must dispute it with me. It may be committed to abler hands, but it cannot be entrusted to a more determined heart. I know the heavy responsibility which awaits me, but whether I perish or triumph, no consideration shall induce me to forego this duty.’”

Writing at a time when it might still have been desirable to avoid entering into details, no further indication is given by the narrator of the nature of the enterprise of which Lord Edward thus refused to relinquish the leadership. Circumstances, it is simply added, changed, and the proposed measure was abandoned.

The counter accusation of obstinacy has been brought against Lord Edward.

“I knew Lord Edward well,” said J. C. Beresford,

¹ Teeling.

in the course of Emmet's examination before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, in the autumn which followed his death, "and always found him very obstinate."

"I knew Lord Edward right well," retorted Emmet, "and have done a great deal of business with him; and have always found when he had a reliance on the integrity of the person he acted with, he was one of the most persuadable men alive, but if he thought a man meant dishonestly or unfairly by him, he was as obstinate as a mule."

It was perhaps natural that Beresford and Emmet should have regarded the subject of their criticism from varying points of view.

To sum up. There was, whatever other qualifications for leadership might be wanting in Lord Edward FitzGerald, one possessed by him to a marked degree. He was absolutely to be trusted. Nor is that qualification a small one.

Returning to the course of events, it has been seen that he had as yet taken no definite step in the direction of active co-operation with the party of extremists; nor did his views, so far as his biographer was able to ascertain them from those who had been personally acquainted with him at the time, yet include total separation. Though numbered amongst the men who had incurred the suspicion of the Government, he does not appear to have taken any share in the negotiations set on foot in the course of 1794 between the United Irish body and the French

Directory, in which William Jackson acted as intermediary.

As the first serious endeavour to establish relations between the disaffected Irish and the French Republic—an undertaking subsequently brought to so practical though fruitless an issue, and in which Lord Edward's own part was a prominent one—this preliminary and abortive attempt deserves further mention here.

Jackson, for whom it ended so disastrously, was an Irish Protestant clergyman, his ecclesiastical duties seeming, however, to have occupied a subordinate place in his career. He had passed much of his time out of Ireland; and, though in what precise capacity does not appear, had formed for some years one of the household of the Duchess of Kingston. In the absence of more precise information, the letter of a correspondent of her Grace, enquiring whether her "female confidential secretary" was not named J——n, and adding a hope that she might never find herself without benefit of clergy, may be taken as pointing to the fact that his duties were of a somewhat ambiguous character.

Drawn, like other restless spirits, to the scene of action, Jackson resorted to Paris at the time of the Revolution; and thence proceeded, as emissary of the Republic, to Ireland. The sequel to his mission presents one of those sordid tragedies of which the history of the time is full. Betrayed by a confederate, he was arrested and thrown into prison, where he was detained for a year while his trial was pending, an

interval spent by him in composing, probably with a view to the propitiation of the authorities, a refutation of Paine's work on *The Age of Reason*.

One imagines him to have been an intriguing adventurer, of no high or admirable type; yet there is recorded of him one trait not wanting in courage and generosity. Unusual lenity having been shown him during his captivity, his friends had obtained permission to visit him in jail; and on one occasion a guest had remained to so late an hour that on Jackson's accompanying him at length to the place where the jailor was used to await them, the man was found overcome by sleep, his keys beside him.

"Poor fellow!" observed the prisoner, possessing himself of the emblems of office. "Let us not wake him—I have already been too troublesome to him in this way."

Ushering his friend to the outer door, he opened it; then, as the temptation to seize the opportunity of making good his own escape assailed him, he stood hesitating. But not for long.

"I could do it," he said; "but what would be the consequences to you and to the poor fellow who has been so kind to me?" And, locking the door once more, he went back to await his doom.

It is a significant commentary upon the man and upon the opinion entertained of him by his friend, that the visitor, aware of the consequences to himself, should he be convicted of having aided in the escape of a captive in confinement on a charge of treason,

felt so little confidence in the permanence of the impulse of generosity by which Jackson had been actuated that he remained all night watching the jail, in order that, should the prisoner after all effect his escape, he himself might fly the country.

The final scene is a ghastly one.

"I always knew he was a coward," said some one contemptuously, who, meeting him on his way at last to receive sentence of death, had formed his conclusions from what he had seen; "and I find I was not mistaken. His fears have made him sick."

He was not only sick; he was dying. Unable to face his certain fate, he had stolen a march on his judges and had taken poison. The account of the scene in court reads like the closing act of a tragedy. While Curran and Ponsonby, his counsel, were raising technical questions of illegality in the attempt to arrest judgment, the prisoner stood in the dock, scarcely able to keep on his feet, death written on his face. Before sentence could be pronounced, he fell insensible to the ground. Could he still hear? questioned Lord Clonmel, before whom the case had been tried; and on being answered in the negative, he deferred pronouncing sentence of death on a man incapable of understanding it. But that sentence had already been not only pronounced elsewhere, but executed; and presently the Sheriff made the announcement of the prisoner's escape. So ended Jackson's mission to Ireland, a year after it had begun.

The coercive measures of the Government had meanwhile done their work in at least driving disaffection underground, and the United Irish Association, as originally formed, had practically ceased to exist. It reappeared in the more formidable shape of a conspiracy, organised, with elaborate skill, with a view to eluding the observation of the authorities. For the present, however, the latter congratulated themselves upon the success that had attended the vigorous measures they had taken to suppress disturbance, and the country subsided into sullen and gloomy quiet.

It was in July, 1794, that the expected coalition of the moderate Whigs and the Tories took place, and that the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Windham were admitted into the Cabinet. In December followed Lord Westmorland's recall—he did not, after all, enjoy the fruits of Lord Edward's labours at Frescati—and on January 4th Lord Fitzwilliam took up his duties as Lord Lieutenant in Ireland.

The few weeks of his Viceroyalty were the last gleams of sunlight before the breaking of the storm. Everywhere hope revived. It was known that he was in favour of emancipation and reform; rumours were probably abroad of the letter he had written to Grattan so early as the previous August, stating that it was to the Irish Liberal leader that, in coming to Ireland, he should look for assistance in his labours on her behalf. These rumours were confirmed, on

the meeting of Parliament, by the presence, on the Treasury Bench, of Grattan himself, the two Ponsonby brothers, Curran, Hardy, and Parnell. Petitions poured in from the Catholics ; a Bill for their relief was to be brought in without delay ; and the repeal of the Dublin Police Act was to be moved.

But Lord Fitzwilliam had exceeded his instructions. He had dismissed Beresford, the Chief Commissioner of the Revenue—called the King of Ireland—and he was negotiating the retirement of the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, with the object of making way for the Ponsonbys. To remonstrances from headquarters he replied by a demand to be supported in his dismissal of Beresford, or else recalled. The latter alternative was accepted by Pitt ; and on March 25th he quitted Ireland, not three months after his arrival, amidst signs of universal mourning. Five days later his successor, Lord Camden, had arrived in Dublin. The hopes of the people had been excited only to be dashed to the ground.

Had the intention of Government at this juncture been that to which Lord Castlereagh's words pointed when, in the course of McNevin's examination before the Secret Committee, he confessed that " means were taken to make the Irish United system explode," no course of action could have been better calculated to attain that object. Popular anticipation had been raised to fever heat only to find itself deceived in every hope that had been held out. It was no wonder if the people were irritated to the point of madness. " It

has been said," cried Grattan a little later, in a burst of eloquent denunciation—"it has been said in so many words, 'It were to be wished that they would rebel.' Good God!—wished they would rebel! Here is the system, and the principle of the system."

The Catholic Emancipation Bill, which, had Lord Fitzwilliam remained in office, would doubtless have passed without difficulty, was thrown out; and in June the eventful session came to an end.

In the meantime, in the absence of information on the subject, we may conclude that the household of Kildare Lodge went on as before. The master of the house continued to divide his days between the cultivation of his flowers, the society of his wife and of little Edward Fox—doubtless an increasingly "great addition" to the party—and the gradual development of the political convictions which, early in the following year, led him to take the definite step of associating himself practically, if not yet formally, with the United Irishmen.

With one Parliamentary colleague he had by this time formed a close intimacy. This was with Arthur O'Connor.

Returned, it will be remembered, to Parliament in the year 1791, O'Connor had begun his political career as an adherent of the Castle, and with praises of Lord Westmorland. By the close of the session of '95, however, his opinions had undergone so radical a change that, in direct opposition to the views of his uncle, he made a brilliant defence of the Catholic



J. Dowling pinx.

Photo. by G. G. G. in

ARTHUR O'CONNOR.

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Emancipation Bill ; conceiving himself in consequence bound in honour to relinquish the seat he owed to Lord Longueville, and forfeiting besides a property he had expected to inherit. An able man, and not devoid of personal attraction, he does not appear, in spite of his sacrifices to the cause he had adopted, to have been wholly liked, or altogether trusted, by his new comrades ; while he, for his part, is said to have surveyed with supercilious dislike almost every Irish patriot with whom he was brought into contact.

Educated to be a clergyman, he had gone so far as to receive deacon's orders ; but had then thrown up the ecclesiastical career, bringing away from his apprenticeship nothing but a bitter hostility towards all Churches alike. A story is told of a dinner at the FitzGeralds', when the violence of the invectives directed by him against hypocrisy, superstition, and finally Christianity itself, unrestrained by the presence of his hostess, was such as to call forth the indignant protest of a noted preacher, who chanced to be his fellow-guest. Waiting, with better taste than the layman, till Pamela should have left the room, the priest turned to Lord Edward, who had listened to O'Connor in dissenting silence. "My lord," he began, "I have sat in silence as long as I could remain silent" ; and it is added that in the denunciation which followed he so maintained his reputation for eloquence that the delinquent was reduced, if not to penitence, at least to speechlessness.

On political matters O'Connor's opinions were moving in a parallel direction to Lord Edward's own, with the result that, at a slightly earlier date than his friend, he also became a member of the United Association.

The two were in constant intercourse, and it was in the company of his new companion that an occurrence took place to which the undue and disproportionate importance accorded by Lord Edward's biographers affords a signal illustration of their determination to view any incident connected with him, of no matter how slight a nature, in a serious light.

The story is well known which recounts how, riding with O'Connor across the Curragh, where races were going on, the two were encountered by some ten or twelve mounted dragoon officers. Taking exception to the colour of the green neckcloth worn by Lord Edward, they barred his passage with the demand—no doubt violently enough expressed—that he should remove the obnoxious article of dress. "But," proceeds the well-meaning but ponderous Madden, "the poor, would-be hero little knew the stuff of which the man was made whom he had unfortunately singled out for his experimental exploit." Remaining calm and cool, and "in that peculiarly quiet tone in which he was wont to speak whenever his mind was made up that a thing of importance was to be done," Lord Edward replied by inviting the critic to come and remove his neckcloth if he dared; while O'Connor, smoothly interposing, suggested the

alternative of a more regular trial of strength, undertaking that he and his companion would await at Kildare any message which might reach them there.

The young officers, however, seem to have thought better of the expediency of pushing matters to extremities, and nothing further came of the incident, except that it is said that, whether because it appeared to the feminine mind that they had gone too far, or possibly not far enough, the aggressors found themselves, at a ball which shortly afterwards took place, left by common consent partnerless.

It would have been interesting, had Lord Edward's light-hearted account of the occurrence been forthcoming, to have contrasted it with that of his historian. Whatever might be his errors of judgment, they did not lie in the direction of manufacturing a tragedy out of a farce.

CHAPTER XIII

1796

Dangerous State of the Country—Protestants and Catholics—
Savage Military Measures—Lord Edward joins the United
Association—Its Warlike Character—The “Bloody Code”
—Lord Edward’s Speech on Insurrection Act—Mission
of Lord Edward and O’Connor to French Government—
Meeting with Madame de Genlis—Hoche and Wolfe Tone
—Failure of French Expedition.

WHEN Parliament reassembled in January, 1796, the condition of the country was such as might well cause the Government uneasiness.

The natural results had followed upon Lord Fitzwilliam’s recall, and the consequent reversal of the policy he had inaugurated. The patience of the people, together with their hopes, were exhausted; repeated disappointment had done its work, and they were ripe for insurrection.

The story has been told too often to need detailed repetition here—outrages followed by retaliation where retaliation was possible, the one as brutal as the other; the Protestants of the north leagued together with the object of ridding the country of its Catholic population, and offering to the latter the sole alternatives

of banishment—penniless and without means of gaining a subsistence—"to Hell or Connaught," or of having their homes destroyed and being themselves murdered. The Catholics, for their part, in districts where they preponderated, had set themselves, in despair of the efficacy of other means, to acquire by force that which more legitimate methods had failed to obtain; and finally the country had been delivered over to a savage military despotism, by which punishment was awarded of such a nature and with so reckless a disregard, not only of law but even of the forms of justice, that it was found necessary, on the meeting of Parliament, to pass an Act of Indemnity covering whatever illegalities might have been committed by the local magistracy. Lord Carhampton, of notorious memory, had been despatched to the west to quell disturbances, and as an illustration of the spirit displayed throughout the country with regard to such persons as it was deemed expedient to remove, it may be sufficient to cite the treatment accorded, though at a later date, to the rebel leader Keugh. In this case the very fact that, at the risk of his own life, Keugh had interposed to save that of Lord Kingston was held, at his trial, to constitute a damning proof of his influence with the insurgents, and was accepted as evidence of his guilt. The man whom he had saved acted as witness for the prosecution. It was no wonder, under the circumstances, that when sentence of death was passed upon the prisoner, a gentleman in the crowd should have lifted up his voice to thank God that no person

could prove *him* to have been guilty of saving the life and property of any man !

Such was the spectacle presented by the unhappy country. It was one which was rapidly turning Edward FitzGerald into a rebel ; which was sending a man like O'Connor, cool-headed and little inclined to be swayed by passion or emotion, to recruit the ranks of the United Irishmen ; and was making the younger and more enthusiastic of the National party decide, in impotent anger—as was done by some of the guests at a “ confidential party ” of Lord Edward’s—that the English language should be abolished, setting themselves forthwith to the study of the Irish tongue.

It does not appear at what precise date O'Connor and Lord Edward took the definite step of becoming enrolled as members of the United Association. Nor does it seem certain that in their case the customary oath was administered. There can, however, be little doubt that by the early part of the year 1796 both had, to all practical intents and purposes, joined the organisation.

In the new association, constructed upon the ruins of that which had been crushed by the coercive measures of Government, there was much that would attract Lord Edward, soldier as he always remained at heart. For it was a body, if not distinctly military in its original framing, eminently adapted to become so ; and which, as it grew evident that by peaceful agitation no remedial measures were to be obtained, was assuming daily a more warlike character.

For the present, however, its new recruit still continued to attend the sittings of Parliament, for the purpose of making his futile and despairing protests against the proceedings which were there taking place. They were such as might well call them forth.

The policy of conciliation having been finally abandoned, the only alternative remaining open to the Government was that of attempting, by means of intimidation and severity, either to terrorise the country into submission or to provoke an open outbreak. It was an expedient which the ministry lost no time in adopting. A series of measures was introduced, designated by Curran as "a bloody code," and as introducing "a vigour beyond the law" into the administration of what still went by the name of justice. It was these Bills which Lord Edward still attempted to oppose.

In the debate upon the Insurrection Act he once more found himself acting alone. Grattan had, indeed, combated the measure with all the force and vehemence at his command ; but, in despair of success, he would have finally permitted it to pass without a division. One solitary voice was lifted against it—the voice of the people's champion.

"The disturbances of the country," Lord Edward warned the Government, "are not to be remedied by any coercive measures, however strong. Such measures will tend rather to exasperate than to remove the evil. Nothing can effect this and restore tranquillity to the country, but a serious and candid endeavour of

Government and of this House to redress the grievances of the people. Redress those, and the people will return to their allegiance and their duty. Suffer them to continue, and neither your resolutions nor your Bills will have any effect."

It was not the language of an incendiary. Even the boyish violence which had marked other and earlier utterances of the speaker had died out, banished by the supreme gravity of the situation. It was a plain, unvarnished statement—a warning of what would follow should the Government pursue their present course unchecked.

"While you and the executive were philosophising," said Sir John Parnell, with a sneer, to Emmet, during the examination of the latter before the Committee of Secrecy, "Lord Edward was arming and disciplining the people."

"Lord Edward was a military man," was the loyal reply, "and if he was doing so he probably thought that was the way in which he could be most useful to the country; but I am sure that if those with whom he acted were convinced that the grievances of the people were redressed, he would have been persuaded to drop all arming and disciplining."

The time was rapidly approaching when, despairing of any change of policy on the part of the Government, Lord Edward was indeed to set himself to arm and discipline the people. But Emmet was right. It was an alternative which, mistakenly or not, he believed to be forced upon him, and to which he only

resorted when all other methods of resistance had failed.

In the May of the year 1796 the important step was decided upon of despatching agents from Ireland for the purpose of reopening negotiations with the French Government, and of ascertaining to what extent its assistance could be counted upon in the attempt to effect the enfranchisement of the Irish people. Wolfe Tone, who had been too deeply compromised to allow of his remaining in safety in Ireland, had, during the summer of 1795, betaken himself to America ; but, too restless to remain for any length of time at a distance from the scene of action, the beginning of the following year found him at Paris, using his utmost endeavours to stir up the Government there to active measures.

His representations of the condition of the country and of the extent of the prevailing disaffection had the effect of inducing the Directory to intimate to the United Irishmen that France would be prepared to lend her assistance to an attempt to shake off their fetters and to establish, in the place of the present tyrannical Government, an Irish Republic. To this offer a qualified acceptance was returned by the Irish Executive, coupled with the stipulation that the French forces to be employed should act in the character alone of allies, and should receive Irish pay. These conditions having been readily accepted by the Directory, and the promise of assistance being reiterated, it was decided to send accredited envoys

from Ireland to settle the details of the proposed alliance, and to arrange a plan of invasion. Lord Edward FitzGerald and Arthur O'Connor were selected as delegates whose position and names would lend weight and importance to the mission with which they were to be entrusted.

It has been denied that Lord Edward and his friend occupied, on this occasion, the position of authorised agents of the United Association ; and in support of this statement might be cited O'Connor's own distinct declaration that he had not been at this date a member of the society. But though his assertion was no doubt technically true, it can scarcely be less than certain that the two were in fact deputed by the United party to enter into negotiations on their behalf with the Republican Government. As individuals they would have carried little weight ; while, besides, the language of Reinhard, in denying to Lord Edward the qualities necessary to fit him for the command of an enterprise or the leadership of a party, must be taken as pointing distinctly to the fact that he held the position he was thus pronounced incapable of filling satisfactorily.

It had been determined that the envoys should proceed in the first place to Hamburg, to open communications with the French Government through the minister by whom it was there represented. Lord Edward, therefore, set out for that town, being accompanied by his wife, with the object of lending to the journey the complexion of one taken for private reasons.

Passing through London on his way, he met at dinner his cousin Charles Fox, with Sheridan and others of the Whig leaders, to whom it does not appear whether or not he confided the nature of the business he had in hand. Thence he proceeded, with Pamela, to their destination ; where, being joined by Arthur O'Connor, the envoys lost no time in setting on foot the negotiations they had come to conduct.

At Hamburg a meeting likewise took place between Madame de Genlis and her adopted daughter, which seems to have given general satisfaction. Pamela had been, so far, a success ; and it was not surprising that when her guardian called to mind the little foundling who had been surrendered to her care, she should have experienced some gratified pride in the results of the arrangement. The opinion she entertained of the position held by her former ward in Ireland—based, no doubt, upon data furnished by Pamela herself—was such as might well afford her satisfaction. Amidst all the gaiety of youth and the splendour of beauty—so the record runs—she had acted with the most exemplary propriety ; and, four years married, was adored by her husband and his family—one cannot but perceive a touch of exaggeration here—and even by one of his uncles, who had made her personally a present of a fine country seat, for to such dignity is exalted the tiny cottage at Kildare, valued by Lord Edward, when it was a question of accepting the gift, at the figure of three

hundred pounds! And added to all, Pamela herself, the heroine of the romance, was more charming than ever. Truly Madame de Genlis had cause to congratulate herself once more upon the success which had attended "the best action of her life"; and in the preface to a work published in Dublin during this same year—the FitzGeralds probably acting as intermediaries between author and publisher—she declared, having no doubt Pamela in especial in her mind, that she consented to be judged by the results of her teaching as exemplified in her pupils. It is a curious comment upon the blindness of affection that in the very volume in which the boast is made a tale is included having for its object "*de preserver les jeunes personnes de l'ambition des conquêtes*"; for one is justified in doubting, remembering the character borne by her foster-daughter in after-years, whether this particular lesson had taken its full effect upon one at least of her scholars. Madame de Genlis was, however, by her own showing, careful to preserve a distinction between theoretical and practical morality. "*On ne compose pas avec sa conscience*," she observes loftily, "*et nul respect humain doit empêcher de condamner formellement ce qui est vicieux*"; yet when it becomes a personal question, she is anxious to point out that indulgence should find a place. It is undoubtedly good doctrine, but, like others, capable of abuse, and, carried out, explains much discrepancy between a creed and a life.

In later years the relations between guardian and

pupil underwent various vicissitudes, and on one occasion the first regretfully observes, throwing the blame, somewhat strangely, upon political convulsions, that it had taken two revolutions to prevent Pamela from fulfilling all the promise of her youth. For the present, however, she had no fault to find with her. She was under the erroneous impression, which, one may be sure, the FitzGeralds were at no pains to disturb, that the visit to Hamburg had been undertaken with the sole object of effecting a meeting with herself; and gratification at such a proof of devotion, offered, moreover, at a time when Pamela was not in a condition favourable to travelling, may well have contributed to enhance the affection with which she regarded her. Lord Edward, too, comes in for his full share of praise. In contrasting the conduct of both husband and wife with that of others from whom gratitude might likewise have been expected, she observes that, knowing Pamela's heavenly soul, she had felt no surprise at her behaviour; but to Lord Edward's constant kindness she pays an enthusiastic tribute.

While Pamela and her former guardian were enjoying each other's society, the two colleagues were busily engaged in pursuing the objects of their political mission, and negotiations were being carried on through Reinhard with the French Directory. The results, however, were not commensurate with the expectations which had been indulged, and were neither satisfactory nor decisive. Furthermore, while Reinhard

entertained doubts of the fitness of Lord Edward for the part he had been chosen to fill, the delegates had in return conceived misgivings as to the trustworthiness of the minister himself. Whether or not such a suspicion of bad faith was well founded, which seems unlikely, the object of it can scarcely be acquitted of some culpable carelessness, since the English Government was furnished by its own consul at Hamburg with copies of certain letters addressed by Reinhard to the French Minister, De La Croix. It was, at all events, decided by the Irish envoys to proceed to Basle, and to conduct their further negotiations from that place—a plan which they accordingly carried out, Pamela alone of the party remaining behind in the care of Madame de Genlis at Hamburg, where shortly afterwards her little daughter and namechild, Pamela, was born.

Lord Edward and his companion meanwhile spent a month at Basle; after which, arriving at the conclusion that it was of importance that personal communication should be established between themselves and the French General, Hoche, to whom the command of the expedition to Ireland was to be entrusted, they determined to proceed to Paris itself. The French Government, however, had its own objections to oppose to the plan, showing itself unwilling, in view of Lord Edward's connection, through his marriage, with the Orleans family, to treat with him at headquarters. Ultimately the capital was visited by neither delegate, O'Connor having instead an interview elsewhere, with "a person high in the confi-

dence of the Directory," while Lord Edward returned alone to rejoin Pamela at Hamburg.

It was on this return journey from Basle that an incident occurred which gives singular corroboration to the criticisms made by Reinhard, and bears witness to the absolute unfitness of the subject of them to be entrusted with the conduct of a conspiracy.

Chancing to have, as his travelling-companion for a part of the journey, a lady between whom and one of Mr. Pitt's colleagues there had in former times existed some connection, the young Irishman—in ignorance, of course, of this circumstance—allowed himself to be led into communicating to her, with his accustomed frankness, not only his own views and opinions concerning political questions, but was so strangely incautious as to permit his fellow-traveller to obtain a clue as to the objects of his present mission, all of which information she naturally forwarded without delay to her friend in the Government.

It was one of those indiscretions—almost incredible, when the circumstances are taken into account—which justified a friend of Fox's, meeting Grattan a year later, on the occasion of the trial of Arthur O'Connor, in observing to the Irishman that if he, the speaker, were to rebel, it would not be in company with Grattan's countrymen, "for, by God, they are the worst rebels I ever heard of!"

Whether or not, as a general indictment, the charge was true, or whether, at any rate, the Irish might not have exhibited in the field such counterbalancing

gifts as to vindicate their character in this respect, there can be no doubt that in regard to some not unimportant qualifications for rebellion Fox's friend was right. In the matter of preparation and preliminaries they combined with extraordinary energy and zeal, and with the possession, to an uncommon degree, of the power of organisation, an equally astonishing lack of some of the qualities most necessary to carry an enterprise of the kind to a successful issue; and in such qualities—the qualities of the conspirator—none was more deficient than the man who was to conduct it.

At Paris, meanwhile, General Hoche was giving evidence of a discretion which presents a marked contrast to Lord Edward's reckless neglect of the commonest precautions.

Wolfe Tone's first meeting with the General who was expected to play so important a part in Irish affairs took place in July, when a "very handsome, well-made young fellow"—they were all young together in those days, from Napoleon downwards, and the veteran among French generals only counted some six-and-thirty years—accosted him with the remark:

"Vous êtes le citoyen Smith?"

"I thought," observes Tone, "he was a *chef de bureau*, and replied, 'Oui, citoyen, je m'appelle Smith.'

"'Vous vous appelez aussi, je crois, Wolfe Tone?'

"I replied: 'Oui, citoyen, c'est mon véritable nom.'

"'Eh bien,' replied he, 'je suis le General Hoche.'"

Ten days later Hoche, whom Tone, now *chef de*

brigade and soon to be nominated Adjutant-General, was visiting in bed, took the opportunity of sounding the Irishman on the subject of the two delegates who were already in communication with his Government, carefully avoiding any reference to the negotiations which were in progress, and giving no indication of any personal acquaintance on his own part with their views and intentions.

“Hoche asked me,” relates Tone, “did I know Arthur O’Connor? I replied that I did, and that I entertained the highest opinions of his talents, principles, and patriotism. . . . ‘Well,’ said he, ‘will he join us?’ I answered I hoped, as he was *foncièrement Irlandais*, that he undoubtedly would.”

Hoche then proceeded, still with the same caution, to make further enquiries. There was a lord, he observed tentatively, in Tone’s country—the son of a duke—was he not likewise a patriot? After a moment’s bewilderment his visitor recognised in the description Lord Edward FitzGerald—the fact of even that momentary bewilderment on his part pointing to the recent character of Lord Edward’s prominence in the movement—and “gave Hoche a very good account of him.”

What came of this summer’s work, of Tone’s intrigues at Paris, of the mission of Lord Edward and O’Connor, and of the attempt of the French Republic to further the cause of Irish liberty, is too well known to need more than a brief summary here.

On December 15th, after manifold delays, a French

fleet actually set sail, with the object of effecting the deliverance of the Irish people. If the Directory had been slow in arriving at a decision, now that the enterprise was actually undertaken, it was done on no niggardly scale. Not less than seventeen sail of the line, thirteen frigates, and the same number of transports set out from Brest, to fulfil the engagements of the French Government. Everything promised success : the coasts of Ireland were strangely undefended ; no troops were at hand to repel the foreign allies, should they effect a landing ; over large portions of the country the population was in a condition already bordering upon open resistance ; the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended two months earlier, and the people, delivered over to a military despotism of unexampled severity, were ripe for revolt. All seemed to presage an easy triumph. But the stars in their courses fought against the cause of Irish liberty.

On the very night the squadron set sail from Brest one ship struck on the rocks and was lost. By a more fatal disaster the *Fraternité*, the vessel which, by strange mismanagement, carried on board both Admiral and General-in-Chief, was separated from the remainder of the fleet ; and when at length the squadron was permitted by storm, fog, and tempest to reach Bantry Bay, it was found that it only counted sixteen sail instead of the forty-three it had numbered at starting, and that what remained of it carried no more than 6,500 troops.

Tone, eating his heart out on board one of the ships which lay off the Irish coast, was in favour, in spite of the disasters which had befallen the expedition, of attempting to effect a landing, trusting to the native population to recruit the invading forces. In the absence, however, of the Commander-in-Chief more prudent counsels won the day ; and after the remnant of the fleet had been once more scattered by the winds, it was determined to set sail and to return to Brest.

Thus ended the first attempt, upon which so many hopes had been built, to establish freedom on the French pattern in Ireland.

CHAPTER XIV

1797

Effects of the French Failure—United Irishmen and Parliamentary Opposition—Attitude of Grattan—Lord Castle-reagh—Government Brutality—Lord Moira's Denunciation—Lord Edward and his Family—Charge against him—Meets a French Envoy in London—Insurrectionary Projects.

THE disastrous failure of the French expedition took effect in various ways upon public opinion in Ireland, and in more quarters than one the whole affair gave cause for reflection.

Even to some of the more ardent Republican spirits, as well as to those by whom the invocation of foreign aid had always been looked upon as an unwelcome though necessary expedient, the unexpected strength of the French armament may have suggested a doubt whether the aims and intentions of those by whom it had been despatched had been so wholly disinterested as they had been represented. A suspicion of the possible existence of other objects on the part of their allies besides those for which the expedition had been ostensibly equipped may reasonably have been aroused.

However that might be, it was clear that the collapse of the enterprise had incalculably lessened, or at least delayed, the chances of a successful appeal to force as a means of putting an end to the system of oppression of which the unhappy people were the victims. Under these circumstances the United Irishmen, with whom Lord Edward must be for the future identified, intimated their desire, in the spring of 1797, to confer with the leaders of the Parliamentary Opposition, together with their readiness to arrive at an understanding pledging themselves and those with whom they acted to accept a moderate measure of reform.

It was an opportunity which, had the temper of the Government been other than it was, might have changed the face of Irish politics, and disappointment and hope might have joined hands to effect a genuine reconciliation. There can be no doubt that the more moderate men amongst the party were sincere in their desire to make conditional peace with the Government. Emmet afterwards declared that, had their overtures been accepted, the Executive Directory of the United Irish Association would have sent to inform the French authorities that the difference between the people and the Government was adjusted, and to decline a second invasion.

On Grattan rests the responsibility of having, so far as the Parliamentary Opposition was concerned, declined to accept the advances made, and of having thrown the weight of his influence into the scales

against the proposed step. Always adverse to the extreme section of the National party, he now declined to meet them, arguing that, while such a proceeding would probably be productive of no good result, he and his friends would be placed in an embarrassing situation.

He may have been right in both positions; yet it should never be forgotten that from the United Irishmen, hot-headed and violent as was the character they bore, came the rejected overtures of conciliation.

In order to understand the refusal of such a man as Grattan, in the desperate condition of the country, to make so much as an attempt at co-operation, it is necessary to bear in mind not only his conviction of the absolute hopelessness of any endeavour to move the Government from the course they were pursuing, but also his rooted distrust of the leaders with whom it was a question of forming an alliance.

There is something tragic, which leaves no room for reproach, even if it is impossible not to see in it cause for regret, in the attitude of the men of whom Grattan was the most distinguished representative. Loyal, true, and upright, they had given their lives, and had given them in vain, to further what they conceived to be the best interests of their country. Now, defeated on all hands, they were forced to look on, an isolated and helpless group, and to watch the people they had done their best to serve led, as they believed, to destruction by other and less experienced guides.

"Alas ! all the world is mad," wrote Lord Charlemont about this very time, "and unfortunately strait-waist-coats are not yet in fashion." And again : "My advice has been lavished on both parties with equally ill success. . . . Would to Heaven it had been otherwise ; but, spurred on by destiny, we seem on all hands to run a rapid course towards a frightful precipice. But it is criminal to despair of one's country ; I will endeavour yet to hope."

It is but a feeble hope which is kept alive by the consciousness that despair is a crime.

The view he imagined would have been taken by his father of the United Irishmen is summarised, a little brutally, by Grattan's son—namely, that they were "a pack of blockheads who would surely get themselves hanged, and should be all put in the pillory for their mischief and nonsense." Grattan knew but little of the individuals who composed the party, and of some of them a more intimate knowledge might have modified the rough-and-ready judgment attributed to him. "He did not associate with them," says the same authority ; "they kept clear of him—they feared him, and certainly did not like him. . . . He considered their proceedings not only mischievous but ridiculous."

And yet, holding this opinion of the men who were rebels, it is curious to study some significant sentences which occur in an explanation given, twenty years later, by the great Irish leader of the reasons for the course he pursued in withdrawing from Parliament

—a course pressed upon him, as well as upon George Ponsonby, by a deputation of which Lord Edward was one.

“The reason why we seceded,” he explained, in the year 1817, “was that we did not approve of the conduct of the United men, and we could not approve of the conduct of the Government,” and feared to encourage the former by making speeches against the latter. . . . “It was not necessary,” he went on, speaking of the Government of the day, “for me to apologise for not having joined them. It might be necessary, perhaps, to offer some reason to posterity why I had not joined the rebels. I would do neither. The one was a rebel to his king, the other to his country. In the conscientious sense of the word *rebel* there should have been a gallows for the rebel, and there should have been a gallows for the minister. Men will be more blamed in history for having joined the Government than they would if they had joined the rebels.” “The question men should have asked,” he once said, speaking of those unfortunate brothers, the two Sheares, who walked hand in hand to the scaffold and so died—“the question men should have asked was not, ‘Why was Mr. Sheares on the gallows?’ but, ‘Why was not Lord Clare along with him?’”

Others besides Grattan, looking back with the melancholy wisdom time and experience had taught, were not disposed to view those who had resorted to physical force altogether in the same light

as they had viewed them at the time. Valentine Lawless, afterwards Lord Cloncurry, has left it upon record that, though he had dissented at the time from Lord Edward's opinion that the only hope of effecting the reforms desired by both the friends alike lay in separation, half a century of vain watching for signs of regeneration had led him to doubt his early conclusions, and to ask himself, "Was Lord Edward right or wrong in his conviction?"

Lord Holland, too, cousin to the FitzGeralds, but an Englishman, and blinded by no national prejudice, when expressing, twenty-six years later, his deliberate judgment upon the principles for which Lord Edward had suffered, observed that "he who thinks that a man can be even excused in such circumstances"—the condition of Ireland in 1798—"by any consideration than that of despair from opposing a pretended Government by force, seems to me to sanction a principle which would secure immunity to the greatest of all human delinquents, or at least to them who produce the greatest misery among mankind."

It may be well for any one inclined to look upon the rebels of 1798 as mad and wicked incendiaries, bent upon plunging their country, for purposes of their own, into bloodshed and misery, to ponder these utterances, spoken with calm deliberation at a date when time had cleared away the mists of passion and prejudice which obscure men's vision at a period of great national convulsion.

In the summer of 1797 a new and important addition had been made to the official staff at the Castle in the person of a young man, some six years younger than Lord Edward himself, but destined, in spite of his youth, to play a considerable part in the history of Ireland during the ensuing years. This was Robert Stewart, lately become, by his father's elevation to an earldom, Viscount Castlereagh, who in the month of July was not only made Keeper of the Privy Seal, but was entrusted provisionally with the performance of the duties belonging to the office of Chief Secretary—a post to which he was afterwards appointed upon the resignation of Mr. Pelham, at this time absent in England.

Lord Castlereagh's was a strong, and in some respects an interesting, personality. He possessed talent, industry, perseverance, and determination. To judge by his portrait, he added a singular beauty of feature to his more substantial gifts, and his courtesy was, if cold, unfailing. As evidence of his charm of manner and bearing, it is worth while to quote a witness as unlikely to have been biassed in his favour as Charles Teeling, the United Irishman, who, describing a visit he had received in prison from Castlereagh—by whom he had been arrested in person—dwells upon the fascination of his manners, his engaging address, and his attractiveness and grace.

Turning from his personal to his political aspect, his views at his entry upon public life seem to have borne the stamp of an inconsistency often denoting



By Thomas Lawrence, p.m.

Photo. by Wallace Cockerell.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH.

the influence of personal choice, as distinguished from the homogeneous character of a complete set of opinions adopted ready made, as the equipment of the member of a party, or the heritage of a family tradition. He had supported the Act of 1793 by which the franchise was extended to Catholic freeholders ; but his desire for Parliamentary reform had stopped short at that point. He was a Tory, but exempt from the apprehensions of his party with regard to the effect of the revolution upon France. When, later on, he flung himself body and soul into the endeavour to carry the Union, he desired that the measure should be accompanied or followed by one of Catholic emancipation.

Comparing his position, at this stage of his career, with that of Lord Edward, their antecedents were not without points in common. Both were Irish, both well born—the Stewarts being an influential family of County Down—both were soldiers, both had entered upon political life at the earliest age possible, Castlereagh having been put forward, before he had completed his twenty-first year, by the independent freeholders of his county in opposition to Lord Downshire's nominee. Castlereagh, as well as Lord Edward, had at the outset voted for the most part with the Opposition. Though there is no definite proof of the fact, they must have had many of the same associates, and can scarcely have failed to have been personally acquainted. Charles FitzGerald, Lord Edward's brother, was a friend of

Castlereagh's, and his aunt Lady Louisa Conolly—in contradiction to the robust hatred cherished by her sister Lady Sarah for the “ignorant, vain, shallow Secretary”—had evidently a liking for the young man, and full confidence in his high character and good intentions.

Yet, whatever had been the case in the past, the two now stood each the most prominent representative of hostile camps—the one backed by the whole force of the English Government and its resources, financial and military; the other dependent alone for support upon the passionate allegiance of the mass of the Irish people.

It was an unequal struggle. Castlereagh won; living to fill post after post of honour, responsibility, and power; while Lord Edward, within a year, lay dead in his prison. Yet the last, living, was idolised, and dead, has been ever loved and honoured; whereas “few men,” says his biographer, “have been the victim of such constant and intense unpopularity” as Lord Castlereagh—an unpopularity which has followed him to his grave, and is expressed, in brutal form, in Byron's epitaph.¹

Meantime, while the new Chief Secretary was being initiated into his duties, things in the country were going from bad to worse. “They treated the people,” Grattan said long afterwards, speaking of the

¹ With death doomed to grapple
Beneath this cold slab he
Who lied in the chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.

military tyranny which prevailed, "not like rebel Christians, but like rebel dogs." As an instance of the spirit which prevailed and the ferocity of the sentiments indulged among the upper classes with regard to the disaffected, then and later, it is worth while to refer to a paper printed, in September, 1799, in the *Dublin Magazine*. Dealing with the effect produced upon the peasantry by the conspicuous exhibition of the mutilated remains of their slaughtered comrades, the writer quotes the words "of a gentleman who seemed to speak the sense of his countrymen" in saying that he wished "we had more heads up, if it were likely they could again rouse the villains to insurrection, for we are fully able to put them down, and the more we despatch the better."

At an earlier date, too, Rochford, determined to set fire to a whole quarter in which a crime had been committed, declared that it was impossible that an innocent person could suffer, for such a person was not to be found.

The peasantry were not, however, without their advocates, powerless though they might be; and Lord Moira in particular, from his place in the English House of Lords, did not shrink from pointing out the results of the policy which was being pursued.

On November 27th, 1797, he made a solemn arraignment of the whole system at work, and after describing the horrors of which his country was the scene—the tortures inflicted, the half-hangings on mere suspicion, the burning of houses, and other outrages daily

perpetrated with complete immunity—"the rack, indeed," he allowed bitterly, comparing the sufferings of the Irish with those of the victims of the Inquisition, "was not applied, because, perhaps, it was not at hand"—he proceeded to warn the House that the numbers of United Irishmen were on the increase in every part of the Kingdom, and to express his conviction that, if the present system were continued, Ireland would not remain connected with England for another five years.

He spoke the opinion of the more moderate party in Ireland, who were rapidly dissociating themselves from any share in responsibility for the proceedings of the Government. The FitzGerald connection, in especial, whatever differences of opinion they might entertain as to the best modes of resistance, were unanimous in their repudiation of the policy pursued.

Lady Sarah Napier, writing in June, 1797, from Celbridge, where she was living close to her sister, Lady Louisa Conolly, is explicit on the subject. She had never, she says, up to that time believed Ireland to be really in a bad way, "because I could not imagine upon *what grounds* to form the *reasoning* that actuates the Government to *urge on a civil war with all their power*. But since, from some unknown cause, *it is* their plan, I will do them the justice to say they have acted uniformly well in it, and have *nearly* succeeded. They *force* insurrection *à tout bout de champ*." ¹

¹ Lady Sarah Lennox's *Letters*, Vol. II., p. 393.

A scheme had been set on foot some three years earlier for raising a militia, and thereby meeting the disaffected portion of the population on their own ground. The plan had been cordially taken up by the country gentlemen, Lord Edward alluding with some coldness to the part played by his brother the Duke in the matter.

"The people do not like it much," he had written at the time—"that is, the common people and farmers—and even though Leinster has it"—he was referring in especial to the force raised in County Kildare—"they do not thoroughly come into it ; which I am glad of, as it shows they begin not to be entirely led by names. I am sure, if any person else had taken it, it could not have been raised at all."

At the present juncture the Duke, disgusted with the conduct of the Government, threw up his command, his example being followed by his brother-in-law Lord Bellamont, and his aunt's husband Mr. Conolly ; while Lord Henry FitzGerald, like Grattan, his colleague in the representation of the City of Dublin, took the step of retiring from Parliament.

Lord Edward, for his part, had not only declined, in the month of July, to seek re-election, on the ground that free elections were made impossible by the system of martial law then in force, but had finally, with reckless generosity, thrown in his lot, his future and all its promise, with the extreme National party.

How much or how little was known or suspected by Lord Edward's relations of the extent to which

he had become implicated in revolutionary schemes and designs must remain a question. That he should have desired to keep those about him, more especially his mother, in ignorance of facts which would have caused them serious disquiet, may readily be believed ; while it is expressly stated that when visiting London on political business, in the year 1797, he carefully avoided the society of those most dear to him, lest such intercourse should cause them to be credited with cognisance of the perilous transactions in which he had become involved.

But while thus taking thought for the safety of others after a fashion he never practised where his own was concerned, it is difficult to imagine that, open and unreserved as he was, to a fault, he should have been capable of maintaining a systematic silence towards those nearest to him in blood and affection, with whom his terms had been those of unlimited confidence, with regard to the objects and aims which had become the main interest of his life and the governing motive of his actions. It is at any rate clear—to anticipate events for a moment—that enough was known to Mr. Ogilvie of the relations of his stepson with the party of revolution to bring him over to Dublin in the spring of 1798, for the purpose of making a last effort to detach him from his dangerous associates, and to prevail upon him, if possible, to quit the country.

Mr. Ogilvie, on this occasion, had an interview with the Chancellor. Lord Clare evinced a desire, evidently

sincere at the moment, to save from the consequences of his rashness a conspirator who not only possessed to so remarkable a degree the affections of the people, but was also connected by birth and blood with persons for whom he himself entertained a genuine regard.

“For God’s sake,” he urged, “get this young man out of the country. The ports shall be thrown open to you, and no hindrance offered.”

It was not Mr. Ogilvie’s fault that the proffered opportunity of evasion was not embraced. He asked no better than to get his hot-headed stepson out of the country ; but his well-intentioned intervention was, as might have been expected, fruitless. Lord Edward was of all men the least likely to leave his comrades in the lurch. If Mr. Ogilvie had ever indeed hoped to succeed in his endeavour, the circumstances under which the meeting of the two took place must have convinced him of the futility of any such expectation. At the very moment when his stepfather came to press upon Lord Edward the expediency of taking advantage of the facilities Lord Clare was ready to afford him for gaining a place of safety, a meeting of the heads of the United Society was taking place in his house. It was from assisting at their deliberations that he came out to receive his visitor, and to demonstrate to him, by an argument which he must have known Mr. Ogilvie would find himself unable to refute, that discussion was useless, and that it was impossible that he should pursue the proposed course.

“It is out of the question,” he said ; “I am too

deeply pledged to these men to be able to withdraw with honour."

Accepting, however, the anxiety of his family and of the Government that he should quit Ireland as proof sufficient that misgivings were felt as to the results of his connection with the extreme National party, the incredulity displayed by certain of his relations, when the blow finally fell and the warrant was issued for his apprehension, with regard to any participation on his part in actual revolutionary designs, affords evidence that they had remained ignorant up to the last of the perilous extent to which he had become compromised. It may be that affection, the desire to spare those he loved the anxiety which an acquaintance with the true state of affairs would have caused them, had achieved what both fear and prudence had failed to effect; and had, in a measure at least, sealed his lips. At any rate, we read in a letter from Mr. Ogilvie after the catastrophe that his wife was supported by her confidence in her son's "not deserving *anything* by word or deed"; while Lady Sarah Napier, describing an interview with a visitor, wrote, "I said I was sure he was innocent, though he had made no secret of his opinions, but that nobody dreaded a revolution more, from the goodness of his heart."

That Lord Edward might dread a revolution was possible. It was also more than possible that he might regard it as the lesser of two evils. It is, at any rate, certain that, with the cognisance of his friends or without it, he had been busily preparing one.

In returning to the history of these preparations it is necessary to touch upon an accusation which, upon the evidence supplied by two informers, has been brought against Lord Edward—that, namely, of complicity in counsels including assassination amongst the methods to be employed against the enemy. It is a charge wholly escaped by few revolutionists ; and the evidence upon which it rests in the present case may be taken for what it is worth.

During the summer of 1797 there had appeared in Dublin—an almost inevitable feature of the times—a secretly printed newspaper, called the *Union Star*. It not only constituted itself an advocate of assassination, but designated certain persons in particular as fit objects for vengeance. On his own confession, a man named Cox was sole owner, editor, and printer of this paper. In the month of December Cox turned informer, and a conversation is on record in which he stated to the Under-Secretary, Cooke, that Lord Edward and Arthur O'Connor had been frequently in his company, being cognisant of his connection with the *Star*, the inference intended to be drawn being of course their approval of the methods advocated by it.

To this statement O'Connor, on his own behalf, gave an explicit denial, asserting that the *Star* had been set up during one of his own terms of imprisonment ; that he had remonstrated with Cox ; and that it had been by his advice that the latter had given himself up to Government.

By the time that the affair was sifted Lord Edward was probably not in a position to disprove any calumny. But the evidence of Cox—further declared to be “angry with the leaders of the United Irishmen”—will be scarcely accepted as weighing heavily in the balances against the witness borne both by Lord Edward’s own character and by those who knew him best as to the spirit in which he carried on the struggle.

The second instance of a corresponding charge is to be found in a letter written at the end of this same year by Lord Camden to Mr. Pelham. McNally, the informer, is there quoted as declaring that the moderate party had carried their point, and that the intended proscription had been abandoned; adding that O’Connor, Lord Edward, and McNevin had been the advocates of assassination, the rest of moderate measures.

That it was ever Lord Edward’s custom to favour the bolder policy, whatever might be the particular question at issue, is clear. It will also be seen that when, in the course of this year, a scheme was in contemplation having for its object the capture of the Castle and the barracks, he had argued in favour of its adoption. In the same way, at a later date, he supported the daring project of attacking the House of Lords at the moment when the peers were to be assembled in it, on the occasion of the trial of Lord Kingston. On the hypothesis, therefore, that the scheme alluded to by the informer was of a similar

nature to these, and one by which a blow would have been directed at the heads of the Government, it is likely enough to have commended itself to him ; nor is it probable that he would have experienced more scruple in making himself master of the persons of the Government officials than was felt by the authorities themselves with regard to the wholesale arrests of the insurrectionary Directory. Assassination, however, is a wholly different matter ; and those acquainted with Lord Edward FitzGerald's life and character will appraise the testimony which places him amongst its advocates at its just worth. With this notice of the accusation brought against him and the evidence by which it is supported, the subject may be dismissed.

Amongst the preparations for a rising now being actively carried on, negotiation with France, with a view to securing her co-operation, was naturally an item of the last importance. As early as the spring of 1797 a Dublin solicitor named Lewines had been accordingly sent to Paris as the accredited agent of the United Irish party. In May a further move took place. The Republic had despatched an emissary of its own, with orders to visit Ireland, with the object of obtaining information on the spot as to the true condition of the country. Owing, however, to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary passports, it was found impossible for the envoy to carry out his instructions, or to proceed further than London. Under these circumstances Lord Edward was deputed to meet him there,

as the authority best qualified to supply the desired information as to the military organisation and resources of the Society of which he was by this time one of the recognised and accredited chiefs.

The information he had to impart, coloured by his sanguine spirit, must have been encouraging enough, so far as numbers were concerned. So extensive were the military preparations that it was computed that in Ulster alone no less than one hundred thousand men were enrolled and regimented. Such was the eagerness of these northern recruits to precipitate an appeal to arms that it was only by the authority of the leaders of the whole Society that they were prevailed upon to delay taking action till the arrival of the expected succours from France, which it was hoped would supply the experience and skill in which the Irish were, in spite of their ardour, lamentably lacking. In all parts of the country, too, as Lord Moira bore witness, the people, rendered desperate by their sufferings, were swelling the ranks of the Union. Had it been possible, at this time, when the enthusiasm of the people was at fever height and England embarrassed by foreign foes and mutinies at home—had it been possible to strike then, the history of the rebellion might have been a different one. But it was not to be; and in the summer an opportunity was allowed to slip which was not likely again to present itself.

A plan of insurrection had been prepared, mainly by the Ulster leaders, to which several hundred of the troops quartered in Dublin were ready to lend

their co-operation ; while a deputation from the militias of Clare, Kilkenny, and Kildare had made, in the name of their respective regiments, the offer already mentioned, to seize the barracks and the Castle. It was a bold scheme, and, carried out, might have wholly changed the face of affairs ; but, in spite of Lord Edward's advocacy, the Dublin Executive decided against its adoption, and the enterprise was relinquished, to the bitter regret of those who had seen in it Ireland's best chance of success. "It seems to me," said Tone, writing at Paris, "to have been such an occasion missed as we can hardly ever see return."

He might well say so. It never did return. Meantime, the year 1797 drew towards its close, and no blow had been struck. But before the beginning of 1798 Lord Edward had made a new and disastrous acquaintance.

CHAPTER XV

Irish Informers—"Battalion of Testimony"—Leonard McNally
—Thomas Reynolds—Meeting between Reynolds and Lord
Edward—Reynolds and Neilson—Curran's Invective.

IT was an evil day for Lord Edward—an evil day for his party as well—when, some time in the November of 1797, he met, on the steps of the Four Courts, a gentleman named Thomas Reynolds, a United Irishman little known at the time, but who quickly rose to an unenviable notoriety, and will long live in the memory of his countrymen as the betrayer of his party and his chief.

The figure of the informer is one which, like a shabby and sordid Mephistopheles, is never long absent from the scene of Irish politics. His trade was sedulously fostered and encouraged by the English system of Government, and to it may be traced much of the alleged sympathy with crime and genuine reluctance to lend a hand in bringing the criminal to justice which has been so often used as a reproach against the Irish people. "The police are paid to catch you, *and well paid*," a priest is said to have told a member of his flock who, weary of the life of a

hunted man, was contemplating the surrender of himself into the hands of the law. "The informer is bribed to track you down, *and well bribed*," he might have added with equal truth. It is not surprising that a people noted for its instincts of generosity should have preferred to leave the work of Government to be performed by its paid instruments, and should have shrunk from so much as the semblance of participation in the traffic.

The indiscriminate horror entertained with regard to those, whether innocent or guilty, who were convicted of co-operation with the natural enemies of their race—unfortunately identified in the eyes of the people with the administration that went by the name of justice—is curiously and signally illustrated by an incident which took place about this time. Two sisters named Kennedy, mere children of fourteen and fifteen years old, and supposed to be heiresses, were carried off from their home by a gang of ruffians, to two of whom they were forcibly married. When, some weeks later, the men were made prisoners and brought to trial, the unfortunate girls were induced to consent to bear witness against them, chiefly, as it appears, in revenge for a brutal blow bestowed upon one of them by her captor. The result of the trial was the hanging of the men and the pensioning of their victims. But so passionately opposed was public sentiment, even in such an instance as this, to the conduct of the approver, that demonstrations of hostility greeted the unhappy sisters wherever they ventured

to show their faces ; that when they subsequently married, the misfortunes of the one were regarded by the people in the light of a judgment upon her ; and, stranger still, the husband of the other was infected to such a degree by the popular superstition that he imagined himself haunted by the spectre of his dead rival, and never dared to sleep without a light in his room.

Of the brutality engendered by the loathing, wholesome in its origin, of the trade, an example is given in a story told by an aged lady, Mrs. O'Byrne, who remembered throughout life—as well she might—being taken as a child, by the servant to whose care she had been entrusted, to the Anatomical Museum of Trinity College, where she witnessed a performance consisting of a dance, executed by means of a system of pulleys, by the skeleton of the informer “Jemmy O'Brien.” The husband of the woman who took her little charge to this ghastly entertainment had, it subsequently transpired, been done to death by O'Brien, afterwards himself hanged for murder, and she took a grim pleasure in the show.

Another, and even more singular, instance of the feeling with which the class was regarded, lasting down almost to our own day and shared by the servants of their employers, is furnished by the fact that it was found necessary at the “Informers' Home,” as it was popularly called—an institution kept up by Government, and said to be a relic of the “Battalion of Testimony”—to lodge the police in charge of the

place in a hut apart, the men objecting to the degradation of living under the same roof as those they were set to guard.

Taking into account this condition of public sentiment, it may be imagined that the position of the paid political spy was not without its disadvantages, and that by the more timorous among the body their wages were not altogether lightly earned. It was not every villain who was so constituted as to be able to ply his craft with the *sang-froid* of the celebrated barrister McNally, one of the most remarkable figures of the time, to whom must be allowed the honour of having carried the art of treachery to its highest point of perfection; who could move even Curran to tears by his eloquence on behalf of one of the very men he had betrayed; who, having first sold Emmet and then acted as his counsel in court, could visit him in prison on the day of his execution, and piously console him with the prospect of his approaching meeting with his mother in another world; and who, finally, carried on his course of deception with unrivalled success till the day of his death, in 1820, when, to crown all, having passed for a Protestant in life, he squared his accounts with Heaven by calling in a priest and receiving from him the sacraments of the Church.¹

For such a man one cannot but feel that there was actual enjoyment in the exercise of his art. But other professors of it were not equally fortunate,

¹ The younger Curran, in his Life of his father, pays an enthusiastic tribute to this friend of forty-three years.

and even among the members of the Battalion of Testimony penitents were to be found. Thus an Englishman of the name of Bird, who had been the means of committing a number of obnoxious persons to prison, sickened of his trade, threw it up in disgust, and published an account of his transactions with the Castle ; while Newell, another of the brotherhood, in a curious letter to his employer, the Under-Secretary, Cooke, accused him, not without dramatic skill, of his moral ruin.

“ Though I cannot deny being a villain,” he said, “ I hope clearly to prove that I had the honour of being made one by you.”

Returning to Mr. Thomas Reynolds, it would not appear that this gentleman, at any rate at first, found the branch of business in which he had engaged altogether to his liking. He was a young man of twenty-six at the time of his meeting with Lord Edward. Brought up by the Jesuits, he had carried on the trade of a silk manufacturer in Dublin. Lately, by means of some land leased—it is said on very favourable terms—from the Duke of Leinster, a distant connection on his mother’s side, he had attained to the position of a country gentleman in the county of Kildare.

His political antecedents were, from the popular point of view, unimpeachable. He had been a member of the Catholic Committee, had represented Dublin in the Catholic Convention of 1792, and had recently been initiated into the Society of United

Irishmen, though, if his son is to be credited, in ignorance of its revolutionary character. He was also—a further guarantee—married to the sister-in-law of Wolfe Tone.

This was the man who—also on his son's authority—was in 1798 hailed as the saviour of his country, and courted and caressed by all who were not actually engaged in the rebellion. Wealth and honours were voted to him ; but, satisfied with having done his duty, he declined them all ; and, honourable and upright public servant as he was, found himself at a later date shaken off and discountenanced by the very persons, with one or two exceptions, by whom he had been employed ; retiring finally to France, there to find consolation for the ingratitude of the great in a small number of friends.

Thus far Mr. Thomas Reynolds, junior, fired with filial enthusiasm. A less ornate account of his father would describe him as, though unquestionably an informer, not one of that lowest type to whom treachery is a trade by which to make a living, who deliberately insinuates himself into the confidence of his comrades in order to betray them, and who, to quote Curran's eloquent invective, "measures his value by the coffins of his victims, and in the field of evidence appreciates his fame as the Indian warrior does in fight—by the number of scalps with which he can swell his triumphs."

It is true that Moore is inclined to include Reynolds in this category, disposing of him in summary

fashion as a worthless member of the conspiracy who, pressed for cash, availed himself of this means of discharging his debts. It is also undeniable that the sum of five hundred guineas was paid over to him by Government. But a careful examination of evidence tends to make it probable that money was not his principal object, and that this particular informer belonged to a different grade in the profession. He was rather one of those persons who, finding themselves—in the first instance perhaps involuntarily—in possession of facts they conceive it their duty to make known, lack courage to act openly, and having laid the foundation of their future career by the initial act of giving clandestine information against their comrades, experience the truth of the saying that "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*," and continue to court and invite the confidence of those they have betrayed, for the express purpose of making use of it against them.

When Lord Edward met Mr. Reynolds on that ill-fated November day, the two were barely acquainted, owing, as the younger Reynolds explains, to Lord Edward's recent absences from Ireland. Falling in with him, however, on the steps of the Four Courts, and aware of his reputation as a trustworthy member of the Society, the latter entered into conversation with the future informer, and before they parted a meeting had been arranged, to take place on the following day at Reynolds's house. It was then proposed that he should temporarily fill Lord Edward's

own post, as Colonel of the United Irish Society for the Barony of Kilkea and Moon, in which was situated the property he had recently leased from the Duke.

According to Reynolds's evidence, given at a later date before the Secret Committee, he did not at first take kindly to the arrangement. He furnished the Committee with an account of the conversation between himself and Lord Edward; of his own attempts to confine it to general subjects, to avoid committing himself, and to put Lord Edward off.

The young leader, it seems, was unwisely pertinacious. He assured the informer that he would himself share with him every danger, and "Deponent on this consented," so the statement runs; falling, it may be, under the charm of his companion, in whom he felt a pride, as in some remote manner a kinsman of his own, and possibly fired for the moment with some spark of contagious enthusiasm.

He had still, however, objections to urge. He did not think—so he told Lord Edward, who probably knew it far better than he—that the United men could stand in battle against the King's troops. One may believe that the answer returned by his chief, to the effect that, assistance from France being expected, some of the Irish would certainly join the foreign lines and learn discipline under their allies, was not altogether calculated to reassure the timorous conscience and uneasy mind of the reluctant recruit, unlikely to look forward with the same cheerful anticipation

as his leader to a French invasion. At all events, it appears that no definite arrangement was arrived at on this occasion, though the interview must have been on the whole satisfactory, since at its conclusion Lord Edward remarked that there was an honest man in the county of Kildare, of whom he gave Reynolds the name, and to whom he referred him for further instructions as to the duties of his new post.

Reynolds's own honesty, if it had ever had any existence except in the imagination of his open-hearted chief—so confiding by nature that it must have appeared to more astute men a waste of their talents to spend them in entrapping him—was not of long continuance. For family reasons—we are not told of what nature—and influenced by consideration for the FitzGeralds, represented by Lord Edward, Reynolds finally decided upon accepting the offered post, was in consequence initiated into the projects and schemes of the United Irish leaders, and learnt, according to his own declaration, for the first time, their revolutionary character.¹ A timid man, and afraid either to rouse suspicion against himself by severing his connection with the Society, or, remaining in it, to co-operate with its designs; entertaining, moreover, scruples of conscience as to his duty in the dilemma in which he was placed, he selected the middle course of retaining his position, but retaining it as a Government agent.

¹ It is difficult to reconcile this statement with the account of the conversation between Lord Edward and the informer.

His son, it is true, indignantly denies that he deliberately obtained information for the purpose of betraying it, and instances in disproof of the calumny the fact of his father's having excused himself from attendance at a meeting of the Provincial Committee, held in February, 1798, to which he had been summoned, and where he would doubtless have been placed in the possession of important facts. But, unfortunately for the argument, it is refuted by Reynolds's own evidence, in which he is stated to have informed the Government of the proceedings of this very meeting, "which Deponent got from Lord Edward FitzGerald"—a safer method of obtaining information than that of personal attendance in Dublin. It is, however, fair to say that it was only after that meeting that he took the step of communicating with the authorities; and that it was possibly true that it was done on an unpremeditated impulse. It must also be added, in justice to a man whose record is black enough in any case, that he seems to have been actuated by no personal animosities; that in the first instance he had even strangely hoped to have avoided the incrimination of individuals; and that to the last he showed an inclination to screen Lord Edward.

He must have possessed talents of his own for his particular line of business, though of a different character to those of McNally; for up to the very last he possessed the full confidence of his chief; and, carrying his life in his hand, he seems to have retained

presence of mind under circumstances which might well have caused him to lose it. A story is told by Curran's son, on the authority of an eminent Irish barrister, of a midnight meeting in the streets of Dublin between Reynolds and Neilson, a member of the conspiracy possessed of extraordinary physical strength and an excitability of temperament bordering on insanity, of whom more will be heard hereafter. On this man some suspicion of the truth had glimmered. Forcing the informer to follow him to a dark passage in what were then the liberties of Dublin, he presented a pistol at his breast, with the question,

"What should I do to the villain who could insinuate himself into my confidence for the purpose of betraying me?"

"You should shoot him through the heart," was Reynolds's answer, made with ready effrontery.

The reply, the story goes on to relate, so struck his assailant, that, though his suspicions were not wholly removed, he let the informer go.¹

Whatever may be the opinion formed of Mr. Reynolds and his performances, he must not be refused the honour of having provided Curran with the opportunity of achieving a signal triumph of eloquence ;

¹ This anecdote is denied by Reynolds's son, who substitutes for it one of his own, differing rather in the letter than in the spirit ; according to which the informer, charged by Neilson with treachery, flung himself upon the accuser with the exclamation, "And dare you say that?" The testimony of young Reynolds in his father's favour has been shown, for the rest, to be not unimpeachable.

and this digression—scarcely irrelevant when we take into account the part played by the subject of it, though behind the scenes, in the closing chapter of Lord Edward's life—may fitly be terminated by a quotation from the speech in which, like a fly in amber, the memory of the traitor is preserved. It was in connection with the Bill of Attainder brought, after his death, against Lord Edward, that this speech was made.

“I have been asked,” said the great orator, “whether I have any defensive evidence. . . . Where am I to seek it? I have often of late gone to the dungeons of the captive, but never have I gone to the grave of the dead ; nor, in truth, have I ever before been at the trial of a dead man. I offer, therefore, no evidence upon this enquiry, against the perilous example of which I do protest in the name of the dead father whose memory is sought to be dishonoured, and of his infant orphans whose bread is sought to be taken away. Some observations, but a few, upon the evidence of the informer I will make. I do believe all he has admitted against himself. I do verily believe him in that instance, even though I heard him assert it on his oath—by his own confession an informer and a bribed informer—a man whom respectable witnesses had sworn in a court of justice upon their oath not to be credible on his oath. . . . See, therefore, if there be any one assertion to which credit can be given, except this—that he has sworn and forsworn that he is a traitor, that he has

received five hundred guineas to be an informer, and that his general reputation is, to be utterly unworthy of credit."

With which denunciation Mr. Thomas Reynolds may be for the present dismissed.

CHAPTER XVI

1798

Lord Edward's Doom Approaching—His Portrait at this Date
—Personal Attraction—Differences among the Leaders—
Delay of French Assistance—Arrest of O'Connor—His
Acquittal and Imprisonment—National Prospects—
Reynolds's Treachery—Arrest of the Committee.

SEVENTEEN hundred and ninety-eight—that year of disaster—was come. The crisis was at hand, Lord Edward's doom close upon him. The winding-sheet, to the eyes of the seer, would have passed his heart and risen around his throat.

And when I meet thee again, O King,
That of death hast such sore drouth,
Except thou turn thee again on the shore,
The winding-sheet shall have moved once more,
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

It was not in Lord Edward's nature, even had he foreseen the fate that was awaiting him, to turn aside from it. He might be a weak man—in many respects he was undoubtedly not a strong one; but honour and loyalty were not weak within him, nor was his the want of strength which leads to the betrayal of a comrade or a cause.

Evidence has already been quoted to show that, almost to the last, the Government, though troubled by no scruples with regard to his confederates, would gladly have seen themselves relieved from the odium attaching to whomsoever should lay hands upon a FitzGerald, and would willingly have afforded him every loophole for escape. But no dream of the possibility of availing himself of such chances of evasion would have crossed Lord Edward's mind. He loved life, indeed, and would fain have seen good days, but not at the cost of what was in his eyes a more important matter than life. As he had told his stepfather, he was pledged to the cause and he was pledged to the men; and to both he was unfalteringly true.

Yet there must have been anxious moments at Kildare Lodge. Another baby was expected with the spring; and Pamela, in spite of the determination she had expressed to Madame de Genlis to remain in ignorance of her husband's political designs, cannot but have been aware to some degree of what was doing. Lady Sarah, indeed, writing shortly after Lord Edward's death, expressly states that his wife had never ceased attempting to use her influence for the purpose of persuading him of the ill effects of a revolution—"which she, poor soul, dreaded beyond all earthly evils"; and however imperfect was her information as to the extent and scope of the conspiracy, she must have known enough to have caused her to look back with vain regret to those happy earlier days when theory had not yet been reduced to



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practice, and Lord Edward, instead of preparing and organising rebellion, was tending his mother's flowers at Frescati. It is impossible, calling to mind the image of the charming, slight, *légère* child whose fate was linked with his, not to be sorry for her, as she entreated his friends to take care of him.

No doubt they did their best. But there is a point beyond which the care of friends is of small avail, and in Lord Edward's case it was not far off.

He was at this time in his thirty-fifth year, of middle height, or rather below it—he was not above five feet seven—and there would seem to have been something still boyish about the agile figure, the fresh colouring, and the elastic lightness of his tread. His eyes were grey, set under arched brows and shaded and softened by the long black lashes which remained in Moore's memory more than thirty years after the solitary occasion upon which he saw their owner. His hair was of so dark a brown as to incline to black.

In manner—the description is that of the feather-merchant Murphy in whose house he was finally captured—he was “as playful and humble as a child, as mild and timid as a lady”; while a very different authority, his cousin Lord Holland, dwelling upon the charm which “fascinated his slightest acquaintance and disarmed the rancour of even his bitter opponents,” describes his “gaiety of manner, without reserve but without intrusion,” and his “careless yet inoffensive intrepidity both in conversation and in action.”

Such, outwardly, was the man who was to lead the

desperate attempt to free Ireland from the yoke by which she was oppressed.

To the spirit in which the enterprise was undertaken Lord Holland again bears witness. No personal resentment had a share in it. Events, personal and public, stirring some men to gloomy and resentful bitterness, had no power to alter the sweetness of his disposition. He loathed the measures ; he forgave the men. "Indignant as he was at the oppression of his country, and intemperate in his language of abhorrence at the cruelties exercised in Ireland, I could never find that there was a single man against whom he felt the slightest personal animosity. He made allowance for the motives and even temptations of those whose actions he detested."

This sunny-hearted and generous readiness to believe the best of all mankind not only bound to him those whose cause was his own, but attracted towards the revolutionary leader many whose sympathies would naturally have lain in a different direction.

Thus it was observed by a frequenter of his house that men were not seldom to be met at it in whom, from their position with regard to Government, intercourse with one so obnoxious to the authorities must have implied a considerable sacrifice of political timidity to personal attachment. In particular, mention is made of a visit from a certain Colonel L—— (it was doubtless still expedient, at the time of writing, to suppress names), who, entering together

with two other men unknown to the narrator but believed by him to be members of Parliament, placed on the table a large canvas purse containing gold ; and, smiling at Lord Edward, observed, "There, my lord, is provision for——"

It was this power of personal influence, the aptitude for gaining affection and inspiring confidence, the result rather of his winning and lovable personality than of any marked talents or ability, which made the young leader a dangerous enemy, and rendered him so valuable an auxiliary to the cause with which he had identified himself.

All was by this time, provisionally at least, arranged. Towards the end of the year 1796 the military organisation of the United Irishmen had been adopted in Leinster. Lord Edward and Arthur O'Connor had constituted the first Directory of that province ; while the second included, in addition to these two, Jackson, Oliver Bond, and McNevin. Lord Edward, besides, practically filled the post—though it is doubtful whether he was ever formally elected to it—of head of the Military Committee, a body whose duty it was to prepare for co-operation with the expected succours from France, and to arrange a general plan of insurrection.

The principal point upon which opinion among the Chiefs of the Union differed, and it divided their counsels to a dangerous extent, was still the question whether it was expedient to await the arrival of the promised assistance from abroad before attempting a

rising at home, or to act independently of foreign support. In this matter Lord Edward, as might have been expected, lent all the weight of his influence to the advocacy of the bolder course, O'Connor being also in favour of it. Emmet and McNevin, on the other hand, both members of the Supreme Executive, elected from the Provincial Directories, gave their vote for the more prudent counsels of delay.

A curious and characteristic conversation is recorded by Madden, on the authority of the man with whom it took place. The pleading of Lord Edward for immediate action, independent of French succour, recalls that of the patriarch on behalf of the doomed city of Sodom. In support of the opinion entertained by him that the moment for action was at hand he had cited returns from which it appeared that one hundred thousand men might be expected to take the field. The objector, also a United Irishman, but one of a less sanguine temperament, pointed out the vital distinction to be made between numbers on paper and numbers in the field, and frankly owned that, pledged to the Union as he himself was, he would not be found in the ranks of men who should raise the revolutionary standard in the absence of the conditions essential, in his opinion, to success. Fifteen thousand French soldiers, he argued, had been considered necessary at the time when the enterprise had first been contemplated; and owing to the number of English

troops now quartered in the country, such an auxiliary force was, in a still greater degree, indispensable at present.

“What !” answered Lord Edward, “would you attempt nothing without these fifteen thousand men ? Would you not be satisfied with ten thousand ?”

“I would, my lord,” was the reply, “if the aid of the fifteen thousand could not be procured.”

“But,” urged the young leader, “even if the ten could not be procured, what would you do then ?”

“I would then,” was the answer, “accept of five, my lord.”

“But,” confessed Lord Edward, “we cannot get five ; and when you know that we cannot, will you desert our cause ?”

“My lord,” was the answer, “if five thousand men could not be obtained, I would seek the assistance of a sufficient number of French officers to lead the men ; and with three hundred of these we might be justified perhaps in making an effort for independence, but not without them.” “You, my lord,” he added afterwards, “are the only military man amongst us ; but you cannot be everywhere you are required ; and the misfortune is, you delegate your authority to those who you think are like yourself. But they are not like you ; we have no such persons amongst us.”

They were wholesome truths, frankly uttered. And there is little doubt that the charge was true. It was likely enough that the young commander-in-chief did

delegate his authority unwisely ; but how, except unwisely, could he, under the circumstances mentioned, have delegated it ? And the weeks crept on, and French aid, whether of officers or men, was not sent.

Various causes had contributed to the delay. General Hoche, the commander of the expedition ending so disastrously, had died a few months after its failure, and in him the Irish cause had lost a staunch and zealous advocate. Bonaparte, on the contrary, on whom the destinies of Europe increasingly hung, had never testified any cordiality towards the project. The exceptional opportunity which the enemies of England might have found in the mutiny in the British fleet had been permitted to pass unutilised ; and no immediate prospect of succour from abroad was apparent.

On the other hand, Lewins still remained at Paris ; where his position was such that Lord Clare, in a speech made in the Irish House of Lords, attributed the ill success of the British peace negotiations largely to his influence ; thus crediting the representative of the United Irishmen with a weight he could hardly have possessed. However that might be, the agent was given reason to hope that the matter would be brought to a successful issue, and it was doubtless with the object of hastening that result that O'Connor was despatched to France at the beginning of the year.

It was not likely that the envoy of the United

Irish body would have been permitted to reach his destination in safety. O'Connor was a marked man, who had spent six months of the preceding year in prison, and had, since his release, been engaged, in conjunction with Lord Edward and others, in conducting the *Press* newspaper, the organ of their party in Dublin. The Government was also already in possession of information, furnished by McNally, as to his departure from Ireland, and the mission upon which he had been sent. But even had it been otherwise, the arrangements for the journey appear to have been made for the express purpose of attracting the attention of the authorities, and of facilitating any attempt at capture. They afford, indeed, another and a signal instance of the total incapacity of the conspirators for conducting the business they had in hand.

Attended, if contemporary papers are to be credited, by no less than four companions, O'Connor had set out from London ; and having failed to effect an embarkation from France at the spot originally selected, the party proceeded to make their way on foot to Margate, accompanied by a cart containing a large amount of luggage. It is scarcely surprising that, arrived at that place, they were met by officials who had followed them from Bow, had overtaken them without undue difficulty, and proceeded to take them into custody.

O'Connor's trial took place, some weeks later, at Maidstone ; a military uniform, the key to a cor-

respondence in cypher with Lord Edward, and, according to some accounts, incriminating documents having been found in his possession. The office of the *Press* at Dublin was also searched, and all papers seized; Lord Edward, who had been in the office at the time of the raid, "interesting himself much," according to a newspaper of the time, "to comfort the woman of the house," and offering herself and her family an asylum in his own house, as compensation for the trouble which had been brought upon her.

In many quarters fears were entertained that evidence sufficient would be forthcoming to hang O'Connor. Writing of the chances of the trial, Fox observed that ministers were "as unrelenting hunters of lives as ever lived," and evidently felt alarm as to the result. Lord Edward, on the other hand, shared no such apprehensions. He was of too sanguine a spirit to lend himself to forebodings, declaring besides, not without a touch of levity, that his friend had had "nothing *odd* about him, except twelve hundred guineas"—no doubt, taking into account the financial condition of the party, a startling and suspicious circumstance!

Lord Edward's hopefulness was on this occasion justified by the event. O'Connor was acquitted, chiefly owing to the evidence borne in his favour by the Whig leaders, who, satirised in a contemporary squib under the names of Foxton, Sherryman, and others, are described as "giving him, as they thought, the highest character in the world (though many thought that they

were unsaying all they had said before) by declaring that his *principles were exactly the same as their own.*"

It will remain a question by what means such men as Lord Moira and Grattan, both witnesses in O'Connor's favour, and certainly not likely to perjure themselves for the sake of a United Irishman, had been brought to believe in his innocence. If, however, their influence availed to procure his acquittal, it was of little service to him. He was at once rearrested, and removed to Ireland, where he passed the next four years in confinement.

On Lord Edward's relations, watching the course of events with natural anxiety, it was inevitable that the apprehension of his intimate friend and associate should have produced a disquieting impression; and before they had had time to recover from the alarm it had caused them, a second event had taken place which threw the other matter into the shade, and was the beginning of the end.

The year had opened favourably, as far as the revolutionary designs were concerned. Ulster, it is true, owing to more causes than one, was not in a condition so conducive to cordial co-operation as had been the case a few months earlier. The seizure, by General Lake, of a large quantity of arms; the difference of opinion existing between the northern and the Leinster leaders as to the policy of awaiting French aid; together with an unfortunate tendency to jealousy on the part of the Presbyterians of the north with regard to the Catholic element, by this time so integral and

important a factor of the Union in other parts of the country, had all combined to lessen the measure of support to be expected from the northern province. But, to set against this, the spread of the organisation elsewhere had been enormous ; and in the returns made to Lord Edward, as military chief, in the month of February, the force regimented and armed throughout Ireland was estimated at scarcely less than three hundred thousand men. Nor was the commander-in-chief likely to take to heart the warning which had been bestowed upon him with regard to the important distinction to be drawn between numbers on paper and numbers in the field. On the surface, at all events, all promised well for the chances of success, should a rising be attempted. But there was one factor which had not been taken into account. This was Mr. Thomas Reynolds.

That this gentleman is not entitled to the entire credit for the sequel is probable. With the members of the "Battalion of Testimony" scattered throughout the country and plying their trade in every district—men of whom Lord Moira had publicly declared, from his place in the Irish House of Lords, that he "shuddered to think such wretches could find employment or protection under any Government"—it is not possible that the English authorities should have remained in total ignorance of a conspiracy which had attained such perilous dimensions, even had not the prince of informers, Leonard McNally, been constantly furnishing them

with data as to the affairs of the Society. But, notwithstanding the means of information at their command, there had still existed, in the first months of the year, an absence of any such definite evidence as could have been counted upon to ensure convictions in the event of the leaders being brought to trial. That McNally should appear as a witness does not seem to have been contemplated, the continuance of his services being probably too valuable to be forfeited even for such a purpose, and of the other principal tools of the Government two at least were firm in their refusal to come publicly forward. Under these circumstances the authorities were in a dilemma.

It is true that another and a less creditable reason than that supplied by the absence of sufficient evidence has been alleged to have been the true cause of the delay of the Government in taking active measures to put an end to the conspiracy. It has been asserted that, for reasons of their own, they had no desire to intervene in such a manner as to prevent the imminent insurrection. In support of this explanation of the inertia at headquarters Lord Clonmell is said to have declared on his death-bed that the United Irishmen had been expressly permitted to carry on their work unhindered, with a view to the facilitation of their ultimate destruction, adding that he himself had entered a vain protest against this policy.

"As to myself," he is quoted as saying, "if I were to begin life again, I would rather be a chimney-sweep than connected with the Irish Government."

With the explanation thus furnished of the tardiness displayed by the authorities in taking action, certain documents, however, conflict, and a letter from Lord Camden to the Duke of Portland, written in February, 1798, should be taken into account. In this communication the arrest of the rebel leaders, in the absence of evidence sufficient to justify a trial, is proposed ; the suggestion, characteristic as it was of Irish administration of justice, being emphatically and unconditionally negatived by the Duke.

Whatever may have been the cause of the previous delay, there can be no doubt that to Reynolds belongs the distinction of having made so definite a betrayal of the secrets confided to him, as holding a trusted position in the Union, as to place it in the power of the Government to strike with certainty and safety at the heads of the organisation.

It was in November, 1797, that the meeting with Lord Edward had taken place, resulting in his advancement to a post of importance in the society of which he was already a member. On the 25th of the following February, chancing to have as travelling-companion on some journey a Mr. Cope—a gentleman “in whose friendship and honour I had the most implicit confidence” (the words read like satire)—he was induced to disclose to him in part the extent of the conspiracy, with an account of the proceedings at the meeting already mentioned, held some six days previously, of which he had been furnished with a report by Lord Edward himself. Nor was this all ;

for he supplied further information with regard to a second projected meeting, to include the whole provincial Directory of Leinster, to take place in Dublin on March 12th, at the house of Oliver Bond.

From this time the Government saw its way clearly. All was arranged with the authorities, and on the occasion of the proposed meeting the blow was to be struck.

The day before the eventful March 12th was a Sunday, and on that morning Mr. Reynolds, whose proceedings at this juncture can be traced in curious detail, hospitably entertained at breakfast a member of the Society, "no particular conversation" taking place during the meal, owing to the presence of his wife. During a walk, however, taken by Reynolds and his guest before they separated, the latter enjoined upon the informer a punctual attendance at the meeting on the following day—an injunction to which Mr. Reynolds doubtless promised obedience; although he relates that later in the day, "not wishing to be at the meeting, as I knew it was to be arrested, I wrote a note to Bond, stating that Mrs. Reynolds was taken very ill," and consequently excusing himself from attendance.

His Sunday's work was still incomplete. Having no doubt attended divine service in the interval, the ex-member of the Catholic Committee paid a visit to Lord Edward, then, with his wife, staying at Leinster House; with the object—in which he was successful—of inducing his young chief, for whom he appears

to have entertained a genuine though incongruous regard, to absent himself from the meeting on the morrow. A printed paper produced by Reynolds and containing directions as to the course to be pursued by the Lawyers' Corps in case of riot or alarm seemed to Lord Edward to point to the possession of information of some kind on the part of the Government, and may have lent weight to his guest's representations. He wished, he observed, that he could get over to France, with which country communication was at that moment interrupted ; since, once on the spot, he would be able, by means of his intimacy with Talleyrand, to hasten the French invasion. The most feasible plan, he added, would be to fill a few fast-sailing frigates with officers and Irishmen and such persons as were capable of drilling the forces, besides arms and ammunition, and to put off the general expedition for the present.

Such was the substance of the conversation, subsequently reported by Reynolds to Government, after which the informer took his leave. Lord Edward, he added, wished him to stay to dinner, but he declined. He may well have considered his day's duty at an end, and, having gained the approval of his conscience, have retired to his well-earned rest.

In one sense his work had been thoroughly performed. The measures taken by the Government next morning, in consequence of his disclosures, were attended with all but complete success. No less than

fifteen members of the Committee were arrested at the place of meeting itself, while four others, absent from Bond's house when the raid was made, were taken into custody almost simultaneously. All papers were likewise seized.

CHAPTER XVII

1798

Excitement in Dublin—Pamela—Lord Edward's Family—
Lord Castlereagh's Sympathy—Lord Edward's Evasion—
Various Reports—Reynolds's Curious Conduct—Meeting
of Lord Edward and Pamela—Martial Law—Lord
Edward's Position—Spirit in which he met it.

THAT March Monday must have been a day of excitement in Dublin. The Government and the Castle had their own cause of exultation, and the populace its own opinions upon that cause. When Lord Clare, hastily sent for on the arrest of the conspirators to attend the meeting of the Council, was hurrying to obey the summons, the mob greeted him with abuse, returned by him with interest, "cursing and swearing like a madman."

Then, falling in with Lord Westmeath, the two entered a shop, procured pistols, and, thus armed, the Chancellor proceeded on foot to the Council.

Many there will have been, throughout the length and breadth of Dublin, who, as the intelligence spread of the wholesale arrests which had taken place at

Bond's house, will have asked themselves and one another the question, "Who next?"

And where was Lord Edward meanwhile, the leader whose escape, should it be effected, would leave the triumph of the Government still incomplete; and in whom the hopes of the people, those others they had trusted removed, would centre themselves more and more exclusively?

This was the question asked by all, with varying degrees of anxiety, ranging from that felt by Pamela as she sat, sick and alone, in the great house in Kildare Street which had seemed to the country housemaid like a prison, to the malevolent interest of the Government officials, or the idle curiosity of the loungeur in the street.

It was clear that he had not attended the doomed meeting. It was also certain—or seemed to be so—that he was not at Leinster House; though, in point of fact, he had been only prevented from entering it at the very moment when search was being made for him there by the warning of the faithful Tony. According to a report in circulation, he was said to have been present at the arrest of McNevin, one of the absent members of the Committee who had been separately apprehended, and it was added that he had only escaped out of the clutches of the Sheriff's officers by virtue of the fact that his name was included in no warrant at hand. But whether or not this rumour was to be credited, he had disappeared, and had, for the moment, given his enemies the slip.

At Leinster House a mishap had occurred which might have seriously affected the issue had the case against Lord Edward ever come to be tried in court. Although timely warning had been sent to Pamela, and she had been specially cautioned to effect the destruction of all incriminating documents, her presence of mind in face of the crisis appears to have deserted her, unless indeed the scarcely credible hypothesis is accepted which would make her ignorant of the existence of any necessity for such precautions. At all events, she appears to have taken no steps to obey the directions given to her ; with the result that, on the arrival of a search party commissioned to demand the surrender of all papers belonging to herself or to Lord Edward, she had no alternative but to deliver them up. She accordingly did so, though not without signs of such evident distress that Major O'Kelly, the officer in command of the detachment, is said to have performed his duty in tears.

Though such a display of her sentiments might not be altogether judicious upon Pamela's part, it was natural enough that, if she had had time to examine into the nature of the documents she had so unaccountably allowed to fall into the hands of the authorities, she should have experienced some uneasiness. Amongst them was one—found in Lord Edward's desk—dealing with the fashion after which, in case of a conflict taking place in Dublin itself, the fight should be conducted ; as well as a map of the town annotated for military purposes by a

gunmaker. The story goes that, information having reached this faithful follower of the fact that his handiwork had fallen into the possession of the Government, he presented himself at once to the authorities, claimed the map boldly as his own, making answer, when asked for what purpose he had drawn it out, that it had been "for his amusement," and so did his best to shield his chief.

The papers secured, the tearful O'Kelly, with his men, had retired, only to return shortly afterwards to Kildare Street in order to institute a fresh search, this time for Lord Edward himself, now ascertained beyond doubt to be not of the number of the arrested leaders. The quest, thanks to Tony's watchfulness, proved vain—a fact of which Pamela was thoughtfully apprised by O'Kelly, to whom she afterwards addressed a letter in grateful acknowledgment of the consideration with which his duty had been performed.

Others, besides Lord Edward's wife, were in sore distress and anxiety on his account. The Duchess was, perhaps fortunately, in England at the time; neither was Mr. Ogilvie, though visiting Dublin at a later date, as yet upon the spot. His wife's two sisters, however, Lady Sarah Napier and Lady Louisa Conolly, were both at hand; and their rebel nephew was scarcely less dear to the one than to the other, although the affection of the childless Lady Louisa was naturally of a more absorbing type than that of the sister surrounded by a band of sons and

daughters of her own. It is, indeed, noticeable that in neither of these two aunts, or indeed in any others of the family, is a trace discernible of any anger or irritation with regard to the line of conduct which had been the cause of so much anxiety, or of any sentiment other than an absolute confidence in the rectitude of the man they loved so well, combined with the tenderest solicitude concerning his safety.

Unusual facilities exist for ascertaining not only the state of their feelings at this time, but also the daily course of events, so far as they were known to them. Lady Sarah, whose husband was in a condition of health which made it desirable that he should remain ignorant at the moment of disquieting occurrences, kept for his benefit a minute record of the events which followed upon the ministerial *coup*. In this diary is contained, in particular, a graphic account of a visit paid by Lady Louisa, on the Wednesday after the arrests, to the house of a ministerial friend, Mr. P—— [Pakenham], and of a conversation there carried on with Lord Castlereagh.

Lady Louisa, who appears to have been in a condition bordering upon distraction, slightly exasperating to her stronger-minded sister, had appointed another nephew, Lord Charles FitzGerald, to meet her at the Pakenhams' house. In his stead, however, Lord Castlereagh appeared, with the explanation that, in spite of differences of opinion (Lord Charles, two years later, was counted amongst the supporters of the Union), nature was strong, and that Lord Edward's

brother had found himself so much overcome by the events of Monday that he had set off early the following morning for the country, to get out of the way.

Having offered this somewhat lame interpretation of the conduct of his friend, Lord Charles's apologist addressed himself to the task of consoling that other relation of the fugitive, whose feelings had *not* had the effect of hurrying her from the scene of action. He informed her soothingly that she might rely upon the earnest wishes of Government to do all they could for Lord Edward, "who was so much loved," adding, with a ring of greater sincerity, that, "as he can't be found, no harm can happen to him"—a more convincing argument for hope than the picture of a paternal Government yearning to show mercy.

Lord Castlereagh also added that he pitied Lady Edward "most exceedingly"—which everybody alike seems to have done.

The host's part in the conversation is also recorded. ("Fine flummery!" comments Lady Sarah contemptuously.) "He only hoped in God he should not meet Lord Edward, as it would be a sad struggle between his duty and friendship"—friendship, one may believe, to the Conollys, the wealthy and influential owners of Castletown, rather than to the culprit himself.

"Louisa took all this as it was intended she should," adds her sister, still scornful; "but when she was out of the room, Emily"—Lady Sarah's own

daughter, adopted by the Conollys—"heard Sir G. S. express his hopes that Lord Edward would be caught; and she did not hear or see anything like a contradiction to this wish from any of the company."

It was indeed clear that, whatever might have been the attitude of the Government some weeks earlier, they were very much in earnest in their desire to possess themselves of Lord Edward's person; and later on Lord Clare, who had formerly given the assurance to Mr. Ogilvie that no hindrance should be placed in the way of the young man's escape, told Lord Auckland, with satisfaction, that it was expected that such evidence would be forthcoming as would enable them to "bring many of the leading traitors to justice, and at their head Lord Edward FitzGerald."

For the present, however, he was fortunately out of their power, and the question occupying all who were attached to him was how he should be kept out of it.

Lady Louisa, fresh from the consolations of Lord Castlereagh, went to visit "poor little Pamela," sick at Leinster House, to adjure her to be silent as to any information she might possess as to the fugitive's whereabouts—surely an unnecessary injunction—and to advise her to remain where she was, receiving all callers, in order to demonstrate that she was innocent of plotting mischief.

Pamela, whose "fair, meek, and pitiable" account of what had taken place made an excellent impression

upon Lord Edward's aunt, agreed to all the suggestions offered; and Lady Louisa went back to the Pakenhams, to make a report of her goodness and gentleness, and no doubt to assure them of the certainty, of which Pamela had managed to convince her visitor, entertained by his wife of Lord Edward's innocence and safety. One cannot escape the conclusion that Pamela was either a very ingenious or a strangely unsuspecting woman. Is it conceivable that, living day by day with a man steeped in so-called treason, the head of a conspiracy about to break into open insurrection, compromised as deeply as rebel could be, his wife could have remained ignorant of the fact? Yet this incredible hypothesis is the only alternative to the theory that she was deliberately and successfully deluding his aunt into a belief in her conviction of his innocence.

Regarding the place of concealment of the object of the general anxiety all sorts of rumours continued to circulate as the days went by.

It was asserted that he had been seen in a post-chaise at Newry, in the company of his brother Charles—the same whose feelings had compelled him to absent himself from Dublin, and who, one may believe, would in no wise have welcomed the society of so compromising a fellow-traveller. According to another rumour, he had succeeded in making good his escape to France. That this last report continued to prevail is to be inferred from a letter from Lord Bulkeley to Mr. Dundas, containing an account

of a meeting at Chester, towards the end of April, between the informant he quotes and an Irishman by whom he had been mistaken for the missing man.

“My Lord Edward !” the stranger had exclaimed, accosting Lord Bulkeley’s correspondent in the street, “I am glad to see you. We thought you had got safe to France.”

Acting upon the principle that all is fair in war—a principle carried in those days to singular lengths—the person who had given rise to the misapprehension set himself, with much presence of mind, to play the part for which he had been cast by his unknown interlocutor. Not only on that day, but at a subsequent interview on the next, he personated Lord Edward, in the hope of thus obtaining information useful to the Government ; while, relating further how his dupe had offered to be the bearer of a letter to Ireland, he gave ingenuous expression to his regret that he had not found himself in a position to forge the handwriting of the national leader.

While all these various rumours as to Lord Edward’s whereabouts continued to be afloat, it is probable that before many hours had passed Pamela could have solved the mystery. She was not such a good actress after all, in spite of Madame de Genlis’s instructions, for not more than three days had elapsed before Lady Sarah recorded that her spirits had recovered in so sudden a fashion that every one was

convinced that she knew where her husband was, and was secure of his safety.

Some one else knew too. That person was Thomas Reynolds.

According to his own account of the matter, the informer was brought, on the Wednesday after the seizure of his victims, to the house where Lord Edward was in hiding, had an interview with him there, and returned by appointment on the following day, when the fugitive committed to the traitor's care an address to the country, encouraging the people to disregard the blow which had been struck, to fill up without delay the vacancies caused by it in the Committee, and to rely upon their leader being found at his post at the time of need. After which Lord Edward, who was on the point of shifting his place of concealment, left the house in disguise.

The question which naturally arises on reading Mr. Reynolds's story, granted it was true, is as to the reason that the victim, affording, as he had done, every facility to his enemies, should not have been, there and then, on the day he had appointed the informer to meet him, delivered into the hands of his pursuers? Was it, as has been suggested, that the authorities were still desirous, at the eleventh hour, of giving him an opportunity of escape? or—a more likely explanation, taking into account Reynolds's former anxiety to keep Lord Edward away from the meeting at Bond's house—was it that the traitor himself still held his hand, and hesitated to strike at the

person of his chief? To whatever cause his conduct was due, the result was the same, and Lord Edward continued at liberty.

Notwithstanding the advice given by Lady Louisa that Pamela should remain at Leinster House—Conolly, always a cautious man, having forbidden his wife to receive her at her own—she intimated to Lady Sarah, on the day of Reynolds's second interview with Lord Edward, that her present place of residence had grown detestable to her, and announced her intention of hiring a quiet house of her own.

"She bid me," adds Lady Sarah, "tell my sister Leinster to be *quite, quite* easy. To *write* would be folly in *her*, and indeed in *us*, for *all letters are opened now*; so I only wrote to Mrs. Johnston, and made a child direct it, desiring *her* to send for Mr. Ogilvie, and show it him. We know nothing yet of how my poor sister will take it—I fear very badly."

Pamela's determination to change her quarters was explicable enough. It may well have occurred both to her and to Lord Edward that communication would be easier and safer in an unpretentious lodging than should she continue to tenant the Duke's great house. At any rate, she carried out her intention without delay. On the very day when she had declared it—the one on which Lord Edward's hiding-place was to be changed for another—he visited her at her fresh abode, in Denzille Street; and the confidential maid who, with Tony, had accompanied her thither,



G. Romney, pinx.

Photo, by Lawrence.

PAMELA, LADY EDWARD FITZGERALD, AND CHILD.



was startled, on entering the room that night, to find her master, whom she had imagined to be in France, sitting with his wife in the firelight, both, as she believed, in tears ; while little Pamela, not yet two years old, had been brought down from her bed in order that her father might take leave of her.

It was the last meeting of husband and wife for over a month—their last meeting but one, so far as any record remains, on this side of the grave.

Other matters besides purely personal ones must have been discussed that night ; for on the following day—the statement is made on the authority of Mr. Reynolds's son—the informer had an interview with Pamela, when she handed over to him on Lord Edward's behalf certain sums due to the funds of the Society, Reynolds being still an accredited member of it. She also gave him a ring to serve as a guarantee of the authenticity of any communication he might have occasion to send to her ; and finally complained to him of her own lack of available money, in consequence of which the compassionate Reynolds sent her fifty pounds, having placed the like sum at Lord Edward's disposal on the previous day.

The statement may be taken for what it is worth. It is a singular coincidence, and one which does not tend to corroborate it, that in Lady Sarah Napier's diary there is an entry the very day before that of Pamela's interview with the informer, to the effect that she had sent her nephew's wife the sum of twenty pounds, in case she might find herself in

want of ready money, which sum Pamela had returned, saying she had plenty by her. It is of course possible that she had not been aware at the time that some of the money at hand belonged to the Society, and was not available for personal use; but in any case it is difficult to believe that, in case of need, she would not have preferred to be indebted to her husband's aunt rather than to the ex-silk-mercier.

At Denzille Street, as before at Leinster House, the weeks that followed must have been weeks of ceaseless anxiety. It cannot be doubted that the desire of Government to lay hands upon the only man whose acquaintance with military affairs could qualify him to conduct an insurrection with any chance of success grew stronger and stronger as they acquired fresh proofs of the extent of the conspiracy, nor can they be blamed for it. The energy displayed in filling up the gaps made by the recent action of the Government in the organisation of the Society, and the prompt reconstruction of the Directory, were proofs that the losses it had suffered had not been fatal to its vital forces. It is said that on the very evening of the arrests three appointments were made to fill the vacancies left in the Leinster Executive; and a handbill put into circulation only five days later gives an idea of the unwearying efforts at work to keep up the courage and spirits of the national party. Preserved by Moore, it is worth summarising here.

“For us,” so it runs, “the keen but momentary anxiety occasioned by the situation of our invaluable friends subsided into a calm tranquillity, a consoling conviction of mind that they are as safe as innocence can make men now ; and to these sentiments were quickly added a redoubled energy, a tenfold activity of exertion which has already produced the happiest effects. The organisation of the capital is perfect ; . . . the sentinels whom you have appointed to watch over your interests stand firm at their posts, vigilant of events, and prompt to give you notice and advice, which, on every occasion at all requiring it, you may rely on receiving. . . . Your enemies talk of treachery, in the vain and fallacious hope of creating it ; but you, who scorn equally to be their dupes or their slaves, will meet their forgeries with dignified contempt, incapable of being either goaded into untimely violence or sunk into pusillanimous despondency. Be firm, Irishmen, but be cool and cautious ; be patient yet awhile ; trust to no unauthorised communications ; and above all we warn you, again and again we warn you, against doing the work of your tyrants by premature, by partial or divided exertion. If Ireland shall be forced to throw away the scabbard, let it be at her own time, not at theirs.”

Evidence of the unbroken and undaunted spirit displayed cannot have been wanting to the Government ; and as more and more information reached the authorities, the measures they adopted increased proportionately in stringency and rigour. They

culminated in the proclamation, on March 30th, of martial law and free quarters—a proceeding followed by what has been characterised by an historian whose rigid impartiality and unexaggerated veracity none will question as “a scene of horrors hardly surpassed in the modern history of Europe.”

It is not necessary to enter here into the sickening details of the system of barbarous and savage brutality of which the unhappy peasants were made the victims through the instrumentality of an army whose condition was described by its own commander, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, as “a state of licentiousness that rendered it formidable to every one but the enemy.” But it must be borne in mind that the scenes enacted through the length and breadth of the country have been allowed on all hands to have been the cause of hastening on the insurrection and of making further postponement impossible.

In Dublin itself and its vicinity the measures of the Government had been marked by special promptitude and energy. Within a fortnight of the arrests at Bond’s, so strictly enforced were the orders to institute everywhere a search for arms that domiciliary visits were paid for that purpose to the houses of men as well known as Mr. Conolly and Colonel Napier.

Of the warning conveyed to Lady Louisa Conolly, in the absence of her husband, of the impending search, and of her reception of the intelligence, a graphic account is given by Lady Sarah. The timorous

and nervous Lady Louisa had, to the indignation of her sister, treated the officer by whom it had been brought with all courtesy and meekness, going so far as to desire that gentleman—plainly disposed to treat the search in the present case as a matter of form—not to allow his civility to interfere with the performance of his duty.

“Thus,” pursues the high-spirited Lady Sarah—“thus did my dear sister so *alter her nature* that she submitted to be *disarmed* and leave her house a prey to vagabonds. . . . What perversion in the noblest nature may be compassed by cunning, by nerves, and by habits of having terror rung in her ears for years ! I had neither time nor thoughts to answer, argue, or try to convince her”—Lady Louisa had come over to her sister’s house to communicate to Lady Sarah the warning she had herself received—“I thanked her for the notice and rejoiced to be *prepared* ; and on reflection I now determine to refuse to allow the search or to give up the arms.”

To which determination, it may be added, Lady Sarah steadily adhered, successfully vindicating her right to retain the means of defence.

On the same morning that Lady Louisa’s visit had been paid, Lady Sarah had received another, this time from a Mr. Henry, with whom the political situation, and in especial Lord Edward’s share in it, was discussed. It was the opinion of the guest that the Government still continued to desire the escape of the young leader. He, however, expressed his

fears that the latter would be tempted "to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard, for that they (I don't know who Henry includes in *they*) all say that if Edward is taken or touched they *won't* bear it."

Lady Sarah also learnt from the same informant that "Lord Ormond and Sparrow made themselves constables, searching for Edward with two dragoons, the latter vowing he would bring him dead or alive."

In spite, however, of the endeavours of police, professional and amateur, Lord Edward continued to remain at large. Nor, whatever might be the case with Pamela, does it seem that any of his relations were aware of his whereabouts.

Yet he was, in fact, during the ten weeks for which he contrived to baffle his pursuers, never absent from Dublin or its immediate vicinity.

His presence in the neighbourhood was no fool-hardy courting of danger; it was clearly necessary. Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, the activity and vigour of the Government, and the possibility that, in the excited condition of the people, immediate action might be rendered at any moment expedient or necessary, it was essential that the man on whom the command of the enterprise would devolve should remain at hand, ready at any time, in the event of an emergency, to take the direction of affairs.

In no case was it likely that, at this eleventh hour, Lord Edward would have been induced to consult

his own safety by withdrawing to a distance. Yet the position might well have seemed to most men little short of desperate. The blow struck by Government, important as it was to minimise it, had been a crushing one, depriving the conspiracy of close upon a score of its ablest heads, and diminishing to an incalculable degree its chances of success. It must further—in spite of the denial contained in the handbill which has been quoted—have been suspected, if not known, that the information which had enabled the Government to aim that blow with such precision and exactitude had been due to treachery; and in the absence of power to bring home the guilt to any individual, it was not surprising if men, carrying their lives in their hands, should have been tempted to look upon each other with distrust.

It was also clear that French assistance, alone promising a fair chance of success to the rising, was no nearer than before. In a note which reached Lord Edward some weeks later, couched, for the purpose of evading suspicion, in ambiguous terms, the Irish agent at Paris wrote that the desired advance of 5,000 pounds—jealousy of too large an invading force had limited the request to that number of men—had been refused, that no payment would be made short of the entire, and even that not for four months. It might as well have been four years.

Nor, turning from public to personal matters, was the prospect upon which the eyes of the fugitive rested less menacing. A hunted man, with, later

on, a price upon his head ; separated from the wife he loved at the time of her greatest need ; his own future, with hers, and that of their little children and the baby still unborn, lying dark and uncertain before him ; his closest friend awaiting in prison his trial on a capital charge ; his comrades, true and loyal, most of them scattered or fallen into the hands of the enemy ; cut off from all possibility of communication with the mother he loved so well, and the thought of whose anxiety must have been in itself a burden heavy to bear,—such was Lord Edward's position through those weeks of loneliness and peril. It was a position which might well have taken effect upon the most courageous heart, the most gallant temper.

Yet, with all this, his spirit, so far as can be known, never flagged. Throughout these weeks of daily peril, when he could feel no security, as each morning broke, that evening would not find him run to earth by the men who were hunting him down, the prey of a false friend or a paid informer, when the weight, more oppressive than that of personal danger, of the supreme responsibility for the direction of the movement which represented to him the salvation of the country and of the miserable people, tortured, murdered, and desperate, rested upon his shoulders, his courage never failed. He faced the chances of death with as gentle and light-hearted a gallantry as he had faced those of life. Only when he was at last tracked down, when the hope of being of further service to his

cause was at an end, is any trace evident of a readiness to relinquish the struggle.

"I am sorry for it," he replied quietly, upon being told that the wound he had received in the fight which had just taken place was not dangerous. It was his solitary expression of regret.

CHAPTER XVIII

1798

Lord Edward in Hiding—Hairbreadth Escapes—Loyalty and Treachery—In Thomas Street—Last Visit to His Wife—Insurrectionary Plans—Higgins and Magan—Attempt at Capture—Acquittal of Lord Kingston—Lord Edward tracked, wounded, and taken Prisoner.

THE history of Lord Edward during the following weeks is the history of a hunted man—a record of hairbreadth escapes, of fitful caution alternating with the reckless foolhardiness which familiarity with danger seldom fails to breed. It is a story of sordid and cold-blooded treachery and of heroic fidelity.

There is no contrast more striking than that presented at this moment by the history of the country between instances of repeated and deliberate betrayal of trust by men whose position and standing might have seemed to be a guarantee of integrity, and the most unshaken and incorruptible loyalty on the part of others to whom the offered bribes would have meant the exchange of poverty and want for undreamt-of riches. The story is well known of the escape of Hamilton Rowan, when a couple of boatmen, with the

very handbills in their possession which offered a hundred pounds for his apprehension, carried him safely over to France. On another occasion three militia soldiers, condemned to death as United Irishmen, chose rather to give up their lives than to purchase pardon by the betrayal of their comrades, the father of one of the three, when desired to use his influence for the purpose of saving his son, declaring that he would shoot him himself sooner than see him turn informer. And again and again Lord Edward, placed by his rashness in circumstances of the utmost jeopardy, was safeguarded by the fidelity of those in whose power he lay.

On the other hand, it seemed to cost little to men like Reynolds, or like Higgins the journalist and Magan the barrister—the two who share between them the honour of his final betrayal—to convert themselves into Government tools. In the same way Captain Armstrong—with, be it remembered, the emphatic approval of his brother-officers—gained the confidence of the unfortunate Sheares brothers, associated with them on friendly terms, acquired possession of their secrets, wound up by dining with them and their family on the eve of the catastrophe—a proceeding with regard to which it is fair to say that he had himself entertained scruples, removed by Lord Castlereagh—and delivered them over the following day to the vengeance of the Government. It was no wonder that acts such as these gave birth in some instances to altogether unmerited distrust ; and as a proof of the lengths to

which suspicion might go, it is strange to find that Mr. Ogilvie, whose devoted and lifelong affection for his stepson might have been expected to exempt him from suspicion, was at one time regarded in the light of a possible betrayer.

It was not considered advisable that Lord Edward should remain for any length of time in the same place of concealment ; and the retreat that had been selected for him upon leaving the house in which he had received the visits of Reynolds was the home of a lady named Dillon, who lived close to the Grand Canal at Portobello Bridge.

Though unacquainted, except by reputation, with the man to whom shelter was to be afforded, she consented, at the request of Mr. Lawless, a surgeon and one of the ablest of the United Irishmen still at large, to receive the fugitive. Under her hospitable roof he remained for close upon a month, ready at hand in case any emergency should call for immediate action ; and in the meantime eluding, so far as it was possible, observation.

It must have been an anxious time for his hostess, who had quickly attached herself to the young leader confided to her care, with his winning ways and loveable nature, and his rash disregard of the commonest rules which prudence would have prescribed. To be cautious was not possible to him, however momentous, to himself and the country, might be the interests at stake ; and a flagrant example of his carelessness was afforded by the prompt discovery, by a servant in Mrs.

Dillon's household, of the identity of her visitor "Mr. Jameson" with the rebel chief, owing to his name being written at full in one of his boots. In this instance the secret had fortunately fallen into safe hands, the man assuring his mistress that she had no cause for alarm, as he would die to save her guest. He likewise refused, with a caution and foresight Lord Edward might have done well to imitate, to receive the acknowledgments of the fugitive in person ; in order that, in case of necessity, he might be able to swear that he had never seen him.

So long as daylight lasted Lord Edward was perforce obliged to confine himself to the house ; but when the friendly darkness—the late dusk of the spring evenings—came on, he would issue forth, a child who chanced to be at hand his usual companion. As the two playfellows—the one, it would seem, scarcely less light-hearted than the other—returned along the water's edge, Lord Edward amusing himself with the alarm of his little companion as he sprang into the half-sunk boats that lay in the canal, the sound of their laughter would reach the ears of the anxious woman waiting at home, and she would go out to meet her guest and warn him of the necessity for caution—a warning no doubt accepted with penitence and gratitude, and dismissed without delay from the memory of the delinquent.

A great conspiracy had also been entered into between himself and his little associate, to while away the hours, having for its object the uprooting of a

bank of orange lilies in the absence of their lawful owner. Truly they were children together.

Even to the most light-hearted, however, moments must come when the pressure of anxiety will make itself felt. At such times the thoughts of the fugitive would turn to his wife and babies ; and he would wait eagerly for news of the household in Denzille Street, of the poor sick wife and her children, Edward Fox and baby Pamela. Mrs. Dillon would then go into Dublin to obtain tidings of them ; and having gained the certainty that all was, for the present at least, well, her visitor would no doubt take courage again.

Life during these weeks and those which followed was not wanting, as may be imagined, in distractions of a more exciting nature than could be afforded by an onslaught upon unoffending lilies. To a man of Lord Edward's boyish temperament and love of adventure the risks he ran would not have been without their charm. A story, for example, is told of how on one occasion a yeoman named Dempsey—the tale was preserved in his family and will remain its title to honour—on guard at Leixlip Bridge, was accosted at dawn one day by a countryman in frieze coat and corduroy breeches, with the question whether there was any night park at hand where he might house the sheep he was driving before him.

“No, my lord,” was the significant reply ; “there is no pasturage in this neighbourhood.”

And the eyes of the two men will have met, in full comprehension of all that was left unsaid. Then, no

other word spoken, the sentinel resumed his beat, and the drover passed on, possessed of a new proof of the loyalty of the people to their chief, and with a fresh hopefulness at his heart.

On another occasion, later on, the peril incurred was more serious. The fugitive was actually arrested by a patrol when engaged in making a survey of the country about Kildare, in company with Samuel Neilson, one of the most prominent United Irishmen remaining at liberty, and the same who, with more acuteness than had been displayed by wiser men, had conceived a doubt of Reynolds's honesty.

Neilson—of whom, curiously enough, Grattan had a better opinion than of most of his associates, and who had also been consulted by the Chief Secretary, Pelham, with regard to the possibility of conciliating the North—was a Belfast journalist, violent, intemperate, and imprudent. He was held by some to be not altogether accountable for his conduct when under the stress of excitement, and his reckless indiscretion at the time of Lord Edward's arrest drew upon him, probably quite unjustly, the suspicion of treachery. By his great stature and Herculean proportions he was rendered almost as conspicuous and as undesirable a companion for a hunted man as poor black Tony, who lamented to Mrs. Dillon the fact that his "unfortunate face" was an obstacle to his visiting his master while he was in hiding. Of his extraordinary physical strength evidence was given when he was brought to trial before Lord Carleton—

that judge the sharpness of whose severity was explained by Curran when he described him as water turned to ice, congealed fears—the jailer excusing himself for the unusual weight of the irons put upon the prisoner by the assertion that though he would not have made use of such fetters for any other two men, they were, in this case, necessary for his own safety.

It was in the company of this person that Lord Edward was arrested by the patrol. Neilson, however, pretended to be drunk, Lord Edward assumed the character of a doctor, and both were set at liberty.

On yet another occasion, a police officer having been observed to be taking note of the house where the refugee was concealed, and a raid upon it being consequently apprehended, he was promptly put to bed, in the absence of her mistress, by Mrs. Dillon's maid, and so disposed as, in case of a search, to represent an invalid lady. The alarm, however, proved to have been a false one, and nothing came of it, except much laughter on the part of the chief actor in the play.

The fact, however, which had given rise to the apprehension being taken into account, together with one or two other suspicious circumstances, it was decided that the place of concealment should once more be changed. It was accordingly arranged that Lord Edward should pass some days in Thomas Street, at the house of the feather-merchant Murphy, whose description of his guest has already been quoted.

In this place, and in two other houses close by—those of Moore and Cormick¹—he spent some weeks, becoming, as time went on and he remained undiscovered, more and more neglectful of the commonest precautions. He went so far as to venture, upon his arrival in Dublin, to visit his wife, whose neighbourhood must have been constantly under police observation. The shock caused to Pamela by the discovery of the true nature of the guest she had been summoned to receive in the disguise of a woman, and her terror at the consequences which might attend his imprudence, came near to costing her her life ; and it was then that the birth of her child—Lord Edward's younger daughter—took place.

The anticipations of the promoters of the conspiracy were assuming, as well they might, a less sanguine complexion. A man named Hughes, examined in August of the same year before the Committee of the House of Lords, gave a description of a visit paid by him in Neilson's company to Cormick's house during the period that Lord Edward was taking

¹ Cormick, though apparently trustworthy* so long as it was a question of his leader's safety, had afterwards a less satisfactory record. Arrested in Guernsey in July of the same year, on suspicion, by General Dalrymple, he not only made a voluntary confession of his past errors, but followed it up by informing against an Irish sentry, who, he affirmed, had offered to assist him to escape—a proof of contrition which appears to have impressed the General very favourably, although he was not altogether confident of his penitent's veracity. "I think there may be some doubt," he wrote, "but I must on the whole bear a very favourable testimony to Mr. Cormick's behaviour here." (See *Lord Castlereagh's Correspondence*.)

shelter there. He had been found playing billiards with Lawless, the surgeon, and the visitor had remained to dinner ; when, according to his evidence, the conversation had turned upon the condition of the country, and the opinion unanimously expressed by those present—some four or five of the United party—had been that the chances of success, in the event of a rising, were small.

It was the conclusion to which all sane men must have come. But it was not a conclusion which necessarily justified inaction. Rightly or wrongly, to Lord Edward and his comrades, to recede from the position they had taken up, however slight might be the chances of success, would have seemed an abandonment of the cause to which they were pledged.

There were other reasons rendering the relinquishment of the enterprise impossible. The work of the Government had been done, and done well. Its success had been complete. "The means"—once more to quote Castlereagh's own words—"the means taken to make it [the rebellion] explode," had not failed in their object. The people had been driven mad. Goaded into desperation by every species of torture that cruelty could devise, it was clear that, with foreign aid or without it, by the advice of their leaders or in spite of it, they would not much longer consent to defer the appeal to physical force. And since this was the case, it was not for the men they had trusted to leave them to make that appeal alone. To do so would have been to play the part of cowards—a part

which, from the young commander-in-chief downwards, no men were less qualified to act. It was therefore becoming daily more evident that the time was close at hand when, in spite of forebodings of failure, the insurrection upon which so many hopes had been fixed must be risked.

It was accordingly determined, taking the state of the country and the condition of public feeling into account, that to wait longer for French aid was impossible, and that a general rising should be arranged to take place, so far as might be, simultaneously in the four provinces ; May 23rd being the date finally fixed upon for the outbreak. The younger of the Sheares brothers, now an important member of the reconstructed Leinster Directory, was accordingly despatched to Cork early in the month, in order to organise co-operation in that part of the country ; while in Leinster, where Lord Edward intended to take personal command, the capital was to be seized, the camp at Lehaunstown surprised, with the artillery at Chapelizod, and the Lord Lieutenant and other members of the Government were to be made prisoners.

Such was the desperate scheme planned in the early days of May. Calling to mind that conversation at Cormick's house, it is incredible but that those by whom the plot was elaborated must have been aware that it was a forlorn hope in which they were preparing to hazard their lives. But there could be no question now of turning back.

Meantime, as more and more disquieting information

was received by the Government as to the condition of the country, its anxiety to secure the person of the popular leader, and by that means to deprive the insurgents of the weight which, both personally and by reason of his birth and name, he lent to the movement, was proportionately increasing. As the pursuit became keener, Lord Edward, with the hope of eluding the vigilance of the authorities, was moved with greater rapidity from one place of concealment to another.

Early in May he threw himself once more upon the hospitality of Mrs. Dillon ; who, receiving at the house of a friend the intelligence that Miss FitzGerald, from Athy, had arrived to visit her, proved herself to be so inadequately trained in the art of conspiracy as to faint on the spot.

It is said that during this second visit to the house upon the Grand Canal even the small measure of caution Lord Edward had hitherto been induced to observe was thrown to the winds ; that he received constant visitors from Dublin ; and that, with the excitement of the approaching conflict quickening his blood, he no longer maintained so much as a semblance of prudence. Under these circumstances, it is not astonishing that he should have been at length apprehended. But that a man so well known should have been able, for the space of ten weeks, in Dublin or its immediate vicinity, to elude the pursuit of those who were upon his track is a fact in any case difficult to explain, and may be accepted as a proof

that treachery had not been so widespread as has sometimes been believed.

The recklessness of himself and his friends, from the point of view of their party, came near to being criminal ; for if the insurrection was not to be deprived of its commander-in-chief, precaution was every day becoming more necessary. On May 10th Captain Armstrong's first interview with the Sheares took place, when he obtained information of a part at least of the projects that were drawing to a head, as well as of the hopes indulged by the revolutionary party of gaining over the militia—a most important item in their programme. On the following day the Government, probably moved to the step by the disclosures that had been made, issued a proclamation offering a thousand pounds reward for the apprehension of Lord Edward FitzGerald. It was this measure which ultimately resulted in his capture ; though whether to Higgins, the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, or to Francis Magan, the barrister, who was the more immediate instrument in the process of betrayal, belongs the credit or discredit has been a much-debated point.

An immense amount of somewhat unprofitable labour has been expended upon the attempt to apportion to each of these gentlemen their proper amount of responsibility in the transaction. The fact would seem to be that Higgins occupied the position of employer or patron—the go-between of ministers ; Magan being the paid tool. The first, better known

as the "Sham Squire," into the details of whose disreputable career it is not necessary to enter, though an informer, was not in the strict sense of the word a traitor, having openly and consistently given his support to the Government. It was his office apparently to suborn other men. Magan was his special discovery, introduced by him some months earlier to the authorities as a member of the United Irish Society from whom useful knowledge might be bought, and who justified the assertion and proved his value at the present juncture by furnishing information with regard to Lord Edward's movements and whereabouts.

From the documents that remain, it would seem that Higgins experienced some amount of difficulty in keeping his subordinate firm.

"If you can see M. this night," he wrote, somewhere about the end of April, to his employers, "you can bring out where Lord Edward is concealed." And again, "Remember to bring him to a point—I mean about Lord Edward." It would almost look as if Magan were still troubled by scruples. The Government, however, had their own methods of removing those indulged in by needy men; and a fortnight later Higgins was able to complain that "M. seems mortified that when he placed matters within the reach of Government, the opportunity was neglected." It was soon, however, furnished with another.

Lord Edward's second stay under the roof of Mrs. Dillon was not of long duration. The night

of May 23rd having been definitely fixed upon as the date upon which the general rising should take place, it was essential that the leader should be close at hand, in order that consultation might be held with him at any moment. About the 13th, therefore, he bade his hostess farewell, characteristically sparing her what anxiety he might, by leaving her with the impression that his visit to Dublin was merely connected with the ordinary business transactions of the Society, and that she might look for his return in no long time.

It is difficult to trace his movements with accuracy for the succeeding week, and they are variously chronicled. The time seems to have been divided between the private house of James Moore, a public-house keeper, where he enacted the part of French tutor to the daughter of his host; and the house of the same feather-merchant, Murphy, who had previously shared with Moore and Cormick the perilous honour of affording shelter to their chief.

It was to Moore's house that he appears to have gone first on his arrival in Dublin, remaining there for some three or four days. It must have been during this interval that an interview took place—the last—between Mr. Ogilvie and his wife's son, described by Miss Moore in reference to the extraordinary suspicion of treachery from which this tried and trusted friend of a lifetime was not exempt.

"I know not whom to trust," she said—as indeed she might, remembering the implicit confidence which

it will be seen had been placed by her in Magan. "I saw Lord Edward take a ring from his hand, and press it on Mr. Ogilvie as a keepsake. Tears fell from Mr. Ogilvie's eyes as he grasped Lord Edward's hand."

It was a final parting. It may be that by both men the probability that it would prove such had been recognised. Perhaps, too, both were thinking of the mother, now grown old, alone in England with the weight of her anxiety—an anxiety to which Lady Holland made allusion when, after Lord Edward's arrest, she expressed her fear that, should the matter end fatally for the "child of her heart," it would not do less in the case of his mother.

Lord Edward, however, can have had little time or thought to spare even for those he held dearest. During the days passed at Moore's house another incident, besides that interview with Mr. Ogilvie, took place. A meeting was held at which the young leader made a suggestion of so bold a nature that less daring spirits might well have shrunk from its adoption. Yet, hazardous as it was, carried into effect, it might have changed the outlook of affairs. The character of the situation, the desperate condition of the conspiracy, demanded desperate measures. It might have found in them its best chance, though a poor one, of success.

What Lord Edward proposed was no less than an attack upon the House of Lords, to take place on May 18th, when Lord Kingston, before the assembled peers, was to undergo his trial for the

murder of Colonel FitzGerald, the seducer of his daughter.

What chance of success, partial or complete, the scheme would have had, had Lord Edward's suggestion been adopted, must remain in doubt. More timid counsels prevailed ; and it was rejected by a majority of two, of whom the informer Magan was one. In the report of the occurrence made by Higgins, he added that an attack on the Castle had been agreed upon for the following week ; and he furthermore, as Magan's mouthpiece, supplied the information as to where Lord Edward would be found that night.

Magan had good reason for being in a position to furnish this intelligence, for, if the account of the matter given by Miss Moore is to be relied upon—and there seems no reason to doubt it—it was to his own care that Lord Edward was to be consigned.

It had come to the knowledge of the conspirators that Moore's house had fallen under the suspicion of the Government. A carpenter of the name of Tuite, occupied in repairing the floor within the recess of a double door in the house of Mr. Cooke, had overheard the Under-Secretary observe that it was to be searched for pikes and traitors. The traitor behind the door took his measures promptly. Wrenching off the hinge, he asked permission to go and provide himself with another, hurried to Moore's house, gave warning of the impending visit, and went back to complete his interrupted labours.

The intimation was acted upon at once. Moore

himself fled without delay, leaving it to his daughter to provide for Lord Edward's safety. This she accordingly did by arranging with her friend Mr. Francis Magan that he should receive the fugitive that same night at his house.

Magan was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded him. Acting upon the intelligence he supplied, it was determined by Government that his expected guest should be seized on the way from Thomas Street to Usher's Island, where the informer lived. With this object the Town Major, Sirr—Lord Edward's Gibraltar acquaintance—provided himself with what he considered a sufficient force to deal both with the leader and with the body-guard by which it was now his custom to be accompanied, disposing his men in two parties, in order that the rebels might be intercepted whichever of the alternative routes to Usher's Island they might take, and thus awaited their coming.

As it chanced, the other party had likewise separated, with a view, no doubt, to avoid attracting attention. The result was that a scuffle took place in both streets. But while Sirr was knocked down and in danger of his life, only a single prisoner was captured, and one who contrived to give so satisfactory an account of himself that he was presently released. Lord Edward made good his escape. He gave up, however, in consequence of the attack, his intention of seeking shelter at Usher's Island that night, returning instead to his former quarters in Thomas Street, and throwing

himself again upon the hospitality of Murphy, a timid man who, though faithful in spite of his fears, would gladly have been quit of the perilous responsibility thus thrust upon him.

Once more—for the last time—Lord Edward had escaped the toils of his enemies. Almost at the same hour, in the House of Lords, another offender against the law had also made good his defence, though after a different fashion. Before a brilliant assemblage, under the presidency of the Lord Chancellor Clare, Lord Kingston had been called upon to answer for the crime with which he stood charged.

“Culprit,” he had been asked in the terms of the old formula, “by whom will your lordship be tried?”

“By God and my peers,” the accused made reply.

“God send you good deliverance,” was the rejoinder, also prescribed by precedent.

The aspiration had been heard. Lord Kingston stood that evening acquitted of murder, on the score of justification, a free man. But to the national leader, awaiting his doom in the little house in Thomas Street, no such plea of justification would have been allowed, bring forward as he might the ruin of countless homes in the place of one.

He had not long to wait. The race for life was over; the quarry was run to earth.

On the morning succeeding the struggle which had taken place between the Town Major and Lord Edward’s escort, Magan paid a visit to Miss Moore. Whether or not there had been any truth in the

hints thrown out by Higgins as to the difficulty he had experienced in bringing his accomplice to the actual point of betrayal, it is clear that those difficulties had been overcome, and that he had now taken kindly to the part. His visit was made for the purpose of ascertaining the reason of the non-appearance of his guest on the previous night, and his careworn aspect—natural enough, seeing that a thousand pounds might be at stake—was remarked by Miss Moore, who doubtless explained it by the anxiety felt by the conspirator for the safety of his chief.

“I have been most uneasy,” he told her. “Did anything happen? I waited up till one o’clock, and Lord Edward did not come.”

Still wholly unsuspecting of treachery, Miss Moore fell at once into the trap laid for her. She not only enlightened the informer as to the occurrences of the preceding night—of which he was probably himself in a position to have given her an account—but bestowed upon him as well the information he sought as to the leader’s present place of concealment, the intelligence being doubtless passed on without loss of time—though no evidence remains of this fact—through Higgins to the authorities.

At the time when Miss Moore made her statement with regard to her dealings with Magan, his guilt had not been so conclusively brought home to him as afterwards. Her own inference, however, arguing from the course of events, was clear.

“If Magan is innocent,” she said, with the bitterness

of a friend who has trusted and has been deceived, "then I am the informer," since they two had alone been in the secret of Lord Edward's intention of seeking shelter at Usher's Island when he had been waylaid and intercepted. At the time when Magan's visit was paid, though the incident from which she afterwards inferred his guilt had already taken place, her confidence in him was too complete to be at once dispelled. Even had her suspicions been aroused, caution on her part at this stage would have availed but little to avert the approaching catastrophe.

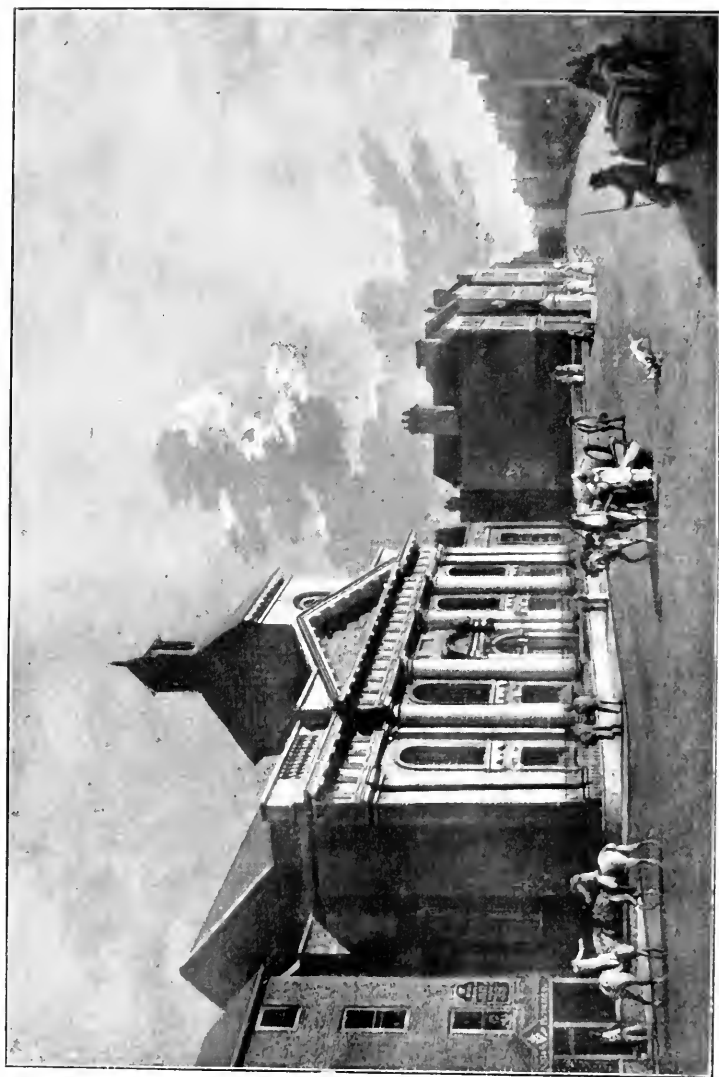
Murphy, on Lord Edward's arrival at his house the night before, had been struck by his altered appearance. It was little wonder. The life he had been leading, the constant strain both on body and mind, be a man's courage and spirit what it may, does not leave him as it finds him. He was also ill, and suffering from a cold. There was, however, no time to indulge in sickness, and the next morning he declared himself better. It was a Saturday—the Saturday after Ascension Day—and for the Wednesday or Thursday following the general rising was planned. Yet, notwithstanding the nearness of the crisis and the supreme necessity for prudence during the brief space of time which was to intervene, incident after incident betrayed the almost incredible heedlessness of the conspirators with regard to the commonest precautions.

As Murphy, anxious and nervous, stood before his door on the morning after Lord Edward's arrival, a parcel was silently placed in his hands. Being

opened, it was found to contain a military uniform, manifestly intended for the use of the commander-in-chief of the projected insurrection—a compromising possession, both for host and guest, which was promptly concealed under a heap of goat-skins in a loft. The imprudence, too, of which Neilson was guilty was such as would have rendered it a miracle had attention not been attracted to Murphy's house, and it drew down upon him, probably quite unjustly, the suspicion of bad faith. The gigantic figure of the conspirator was constantly on view, now patrolling the street, now pausing at the door of Lord Edward's unfortunate host, to bestow upon him wholly superfluous injunctions as to the necessity for caution.

Lord Edward himself meanwhile, warned by the sight of a party of soldiers passing down the street and making a halt before Moore's house, had betaken himself to a place of concealment upon the roof, where he spent some hours of the afternoon. But as evening drew on, it was considered safe for the fugitive to leave his hiding-place, and he accordingly came down to dinner, sharing the meal with his host and Neilson.

It was scarcely over when the latter, for whose movements it is always difficult to account, suddenly quitted the house, leaving, it was said, the outer door open. Murphy, meanwhile went downstairs, while Lord Edward, still ill and tired, withdrew to the room he occupied, where he was presently found by his host, lying upon the bed, reading *Gil Blas*.



Matton.

ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH AND THOMAS STREET.

Plate 1. 1840.

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The end was close at hand. It was when the two men were together that the sound of steps became audible upon the stairs ; and the next moment Sirr's assistant, Major Swan, entered the room. Lord Edward had been tracked at last.

Of the scene which followed varying accounts have been given. The surprise party consisted of Sirr himself, Swan, and eight or nine private soldiers, together with a Captain Ryan, who seems to have accompanied the party in the character of a volunteer. Sirr had at first remained below, disposing of his men in such a manner as to frustrate any attempt which might be made at escape ; and Swan, though closely followed by Ryan, entered alone the room where Lord Edward was discovered.

At the first sight of the intruder Lord Edward sprang to his feet, and, receiving a shot from a pocket pistol which missed its aim, struck at his assailant with a dagger which had lain by him on the bed.

According to the account afterwards given by Ryan's son, Swan—whose wound was in truth very superficial and was well in a fortnight—thereupon cried out, "Ryan, Ryan, I am basely murdered," when Ryan, who appears to have been a man of courage, ran in to his assistance, armed only with a sword-cane ; received what proved to be, in his case, a mortal wound, and continued, in spite of it, to cling to Lord Edward till further help arrived.

Sirr, meanwhile, hearing from below the report of

the pistol-shot fired by Swan on his first entrance, had hurried upstairs, and has left, in a letter addressed to the younger Ryan, a description of the scene which met his eyes.

“On my arrival in view of Lord Edward,” he wrote, “I beheld his lordship standing with a dagger in his hand, as if ready to plunge it into my friends, while dear Ryan, seated on the bottom step of the flight of the upper stairs [communicating with the roof], had Lord Edward grasped with both his arms by the legs and thighs, and Swan in a somewhat similar situation, both labouring under the torment of their wounds ; when, without hesitation, I fired at Lord Edward’s dagger-arm, when the instrument of death fell to the ground.”

Weaponless and wounded, Lord Edward still refused to surrender, making a last attempt to force his way to the door. The soldiers, however, were called in, and, in spite of his desperate resistance, he was made prisoner, though “so outrageous was he”—to quote Ryan—“that the military had to cross their muskets, and force him down to the floor, before he could be overpowered and secured.”

Thus ended the struggle. The people’s leader was in the hands of the enemy. On this night—possibly at this very hour—Magan was elected a member of the head Committee of the Society of United Irishmen.

CHAPTER XIX

1798

Conduct when a Prisoner—Various Scenes in Dublin—
Pamela—The Facts and her Account of Them at
Variance—Her After-life—Visit to Barère—Death.

THE capture was effected ; the game, so far as Lord Edward was concerned, lost. But he was a man who knew how to face defeat.

The heat and excitement of the struggle over, all his habitual gentleness and courtesy was apparent. He affected, says the *Annual Register*, with a sneer, in chronicling the event, the politeness of a courtier, and declared he was sorry for the wounds he had inflicted. It was evidently not credible to the writer that consideration towards opponents hurt in the performance of their duty could be genuine in the case of a man whose resistance, while resistance was possible, had been so fierce. Those who knew him would have judged differently. Insisting that the wounds of his adversaries should be attended to before his own, it was only when he had been informed, with purposeless exaggeration, that Ryan was dead and Swan mortally

wounded, that he consented to allow his arm to be dressed, adding, "It was a hard struggle—and are two of them gone?"

His own wound, on examination, was pronounced not to be dangerous, the announcement eliciting from him the solitary expression of regret that has already been noticed. Exhausted not alone by the pain and fatigue of the moment, but worn out physically and mentally by the constant stress and strain of the last two months; debarred from participation in the struggle for which he had so strenuously prepared the way, and rendered useless to the cause for whose sake he had sacrificed all the world had to offer, he may indeed have been willing to close his account with life, and to make an end of the tragedy it had become.

At the Castle, to which he was at once taken, he had an interview with Lord Camden's private secretary, Mr. Watson, who, sent by the Lord Lieutenant to assure the prisoner of every consideration consistent with the safe custody of his person, found him in the office of the Minister for War, looking on, pallid but serene, while his wounded arm was dressed.

The secretary, a courteous and kindly official, took an opportunity, after delivering the message with which he was charged, of informing the prisoner privately that it was to be also his errand to convey the news of the arrest to Lady Edward, intimating, with every promise of secrecy, his readiness to be likewise the bearer of any confidential communication from Lord Edward to his wife.

One might almost imagine that the offer must have provoked an inward smile. Experience of the principles acted upon by Government with regard to means of obtaining information would not have encouraged even so confiding a spirit as that of their present prisoner to entrust a communication of the kind suggested to a Castle official, however accommodating. At any rate, the proposal was courteously declined.

"No, no, thank you," Lord Edward answered. "Nothing, nothing. Only break it to her tenderly."

The interview with Pamela did not, after all, take place, since she chanced, somewhat strangely, to be absent from home, at a party at Moira House. The news of her husband's capture was therefore left by the secretary with her servants, and, through Lady Moira's thoughtful consideration, was not allowed to reach her till the following morning.

It is strange, looking back over more than a hundred years, to call to mind the various scenes which were taking place on that May evening in Dublin. At some of them, thanks to the detailed contemporary records, we can be present. There was, first, the desperate struggle in Thomas Street, the excitement of the conflict followed by the dead calm of irretrievable failure ; there was the party at Lady Moira's house, at which Pamela, still delicate after her baby's birth, and little inclined, one would imagine, for gaiety, was assisting, charming as ever, and no doubt, in her ignorance of the catastrophe,

of which rumours must have begun to be whispered abroad, an object of compassion to all. Then there was the Lord Lieutenant, with a party of his own at the theatre, where news was brought to him of the important capture. In an adjoining box, within hearing of the announcement, Lady Castlereagh was entertaining her guests, two of the Napiers amongst them, of whom one—Louisa, Lady Sarah's step-daughter—was so much overcome that her hostess took her away; while a younger sister, Emily, Lord Edward's own cousin—who, "poor little soul, was wretched, as you may imagine"—was not permitted to leave the box, lest so many abrupt departures, in the condition of Dublin at the time, should have given rise to a panic. Nor does one forget that elsewhere in the city Magan was receiving his promotion in the Society he had served by the betrayal of its chief, not impossibly still careworn in aspect, as Miss Moore had described him, and with his thoughts wandering from the proceedings in which he was taking part to the house in Thomas Street, and to speculations as to whether his thousand pounds were at length fairly earned.

Outside, in the streets of the city, as the news leaked out and became public property, consternation was spreading. Men were collecting together in groups to discuss the event, or were seen hurrying from one part of the town to the other; and some of the more desperate and more daring were arming themselves with pikes, in the forlorn hope of effect-

ing a rescue—a hope perforce relinquished when it became known that their leader had been already removed from the Castle to the securer precincts of Newgate Jail, a stronghold to which no follower, however loyal, could force an entrance.

Upon Lord Edward's family the intelligence of the arrest fell like a thunderbolt. Well informed as to his movements as the Government had been, in comparison, and though, according to Miss Moore's account of his interview with Mr. Ogilvie, his stepfather at least must have been aware of his presence in Dublin, the rest of his relations were strongly convinced that he had effected his escape, and was safe out of the country. Lady Louisa herself, though ever prone to fears, had scarcely felt alarm at the reward offered by Government for his apprehension. In this instance it was clear that Pamela had kept her own counsel; and it may have been to the necessity of avoiding the appearance of anxiety that her presence at Moira House on the night of the arrest had been due.

Pamela herself, though apparently dazed by the blow—"her head seemed still deranged," wrote Lady Louisa—had borne it better than had been expected. She was indeed described by Colonel Napier, from whom she received a visit in the course of the next day, as keeping up her spirits and bearing her misfortunes like a heroine—a form of encomium which one may be pardoned for believing would have specially commended itself to the subject of the tribute. It is clear that the

courage she displayed was only explicable to the narrator by the hypothesis of her ignorance of the gravity of the situation. "Alas!" he added, writing to Mr. Ogilvie, now back again in England, "she does not know what I dread to be true, that Government have strong and even indubitable proofs of *treason*."

Again the question repeats itself—Was Colonel Napier right? Was Pamela strangely, incredibly, blind? Did she in truth succeed in deceiving herself as to the degree of her husband's culpability in the eyes of those who had his life in their hands? Or did her powers of concealing what she knew, even now that the crisis was reached and the blow had fallen, from those to whom Lord Edward was scarcely less dear than to herself, amount almost to genius?

At any rate, she was winning golden opinions. In the letter already quoted, dated two days after the capture, Colonel Napier again makes mention of her. After informing Ogilvie that George Ponsonby and Curran were to be Lord Edward's counsel, and adding the warning that the former "feared the event," he expresses his hope that poor, dear, intrepid Lady Edward "will cross to England, in obedience to the orders of the Privy Council, Ponsonby being of opinion that she could be of no use in Dublin."

The statement requires explanation. The part played by Pamela during the brief remainder of her husband's life is perplexing in the extreme, and may be disposed of here. Of the affectionate nature of their relations there can be no doubt. Lord Edward

had more than once, during the weeks that he passed in hiding, risked his life in order to visit her ; his mother's evidence remains to testify that he "adored her" ; and if further proof were wanting, it would be furnished by the will, drawn up in prison, bequeathing to his wife all he possessed, "as a mark of my esteem, love, and confidence in her," and constituting her likewise sole guardian of his children.

That Pamela loved him as much as she was capable of loving there is also no reason to doubt ; nor is there a trace of any cloud upon their married life. Yet that she should have brought herself, though in "sad distress," to obey the orders of the Government—themselves difficult of comprehension in their extreme and wanton severity—when, judging by the phrasing of Colonel Napier's letter, disobedience had not been altogether out of the question, is a fact which seems scarcely credible.

Nevertheless, on May 22nd, not more than three days after the arrest, Lady Louisa Conolly was able to announce to her sister that the departure of her nephew's wife for England was finally determined upon ; that the hopes entertained by Pamela of being permitted to share her husband's prison had been already relinquished ; and, strangest of all, when Lady Louisa had made a further and vain attempt to obtain for his wife the privilege of a single farewell interview—a request which, if pressed, the Irish Government itself would have found difficult to refuse—Pamela had negatived the suggestion, on the

score of a fear lest such an indulgence might be the means of causing an accession of fever to the prisoner. This curious and, again, almost incredible instance of prudence on her part, implies a realisation of his condition rendering it still more incomprehensible that she should have consented to put the sea between them.

Explain the matter as we may, the fact remains that before a week was over—on the Thursday following the capture—Pamela had yielded to a mandate which it may be believed that, with public opinion to consider, ministers would have hesitated to enforce in the face of a determined resistance, and had left her husband behind, wounded, a prisoner, and in danger of his life from other causes. Whatever may have been the motives which decided her, or her advisers, upon the step, they will strike the ordinary mind as insufficient. Not more than ten days after she had quitted Dublin, Lord Edward was dead.

It is fair to add that it does not appear to have occurred to her husband's relations to criticise her conduct. On the contrary, while his mother was preparing, be the condition of the country what it might, to come to Ireland; while Henry FitzGerald was hurrying over to Dublin to share, if it might be, his brother's cell; while his aunt was besieging the authorities with entreaties to be allowed admission to the prison, and, though only at the eleventh hour, gained her point, the absence of his wife seems to have been accepted on all hands as natural, or at

least inevitable. Tender as is every allusion to her, pitiful in her forlorn condition, all appear to have been agreed that she was better away.

There were doubtless reasons—sentiment apart—making it expedient that Pamela should cross the Channel. The prejudice, according to Lady Louisa, prevailing against her from the first as a French-woman—no doubt amongst ministerialists—had so much increased that it was considered safer for her to be out of the country. This statement is further explained by an entry in Lady Holland's diary, dated June 10th, to the effect that it had been notified to Lord Edward's wife that in case of disobedience she would herself be arrested and tried, evidence sufficient being forthcoming to hang her. Lady Holland adds that Pamela had been willing to stand her trial, provided she was permitted to share her husband's prison. This being refused, she had been compelled to come to England, accompanied by her two children, with a passport limiting her stay.¹

Allowing for some exaggeration, and observing that the mistake in the number of the children does not indicate an intimate acquaintance with the facts, it still remains possible that a certain amount of intimidation may have been resorted to by the authorities. This should be allowed its weight in judging of Pamela's conduct at this crisis. But there is yet another curious circumstance to be noted in connection with the affair—namely, the entire disagreement of

¹ *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox* (Appendix).

the account of the matter apparently given by Pamela in later days with that furnished by contemporaneous letters, by which the question of her movements is placed beyond all doubt. Hers was a totally different tale—a story, it is necessary to add, so manifestly false, tested both by external and internal evidence, in some of its features, that it is impossible, however charitably disposed, to view this version of the affair in any other light but that of a romance in which, by an after-thought, she assigned to herself the part which she would have desired in retrospect to play. That Pamela, as she asserted, sold her jewels and attempted to bribe the jailer is probable enough. She was generous and open-handed, and was not likely to have spared money in such a case. It has even been suggested that an endeavour to bribe the Newgate officials may furnish a possible explanation of the otherwise inexplicable severity of the Government in banishing her from Ireland. But of the interview with her husband she appears to have represented herself as obtaining, with its melodramatic colouring, there exists no faintest independent proof, and it must be dismissed as either an hysterical delusion or as a pure result of the inventive faculty of Madame de Genlis's pupil.¹

So Lord Edward's wife disappears from his history—a graceful, slight figure, not without a delicate charm of her own, but most unfit for the stormy scenes

¹ See Madden's *United Irishmen* for the authority on which this story rests.

with which she had been associated in France and Ireland alike, and incapable of grappling with life in its harsher aspects.

It is not necessary to follow her through her subsequent history—her marriage with the American Consul at Hamburg, her separation from her husband, and the events which marked her after-life. One glimpse of her will be enough, and it is still in character.

Thirty years after Lord Edward's death it occurred to her one day—the motive of the disguise is not apparent—to visit her early friend, Barère, in the character of her own maid. Recognising in his guest the girl to whom, nearly forty years ago, he had acted the part, required by French law, of “guardian,” on the occasion of her marriage, he produced a portrait of herself which he had preserved, and showed it to her.

“*Ah, mon Dieu,*” she exclaimed, no longer attempting to keep up the farce of her incognito, “*comme j’étais jolie !*” begging the miniature of him, in order that she might prove to another friend how great her past beauty had been.

A year later she died, worth only a hundred francs. The husband from whom she had separated paid her debts, and the funeral was provided by her old playfellow, Madame Adelaide.

CHAPTER XX

1798

Attempts to ensure a Fair Trial—Prince of Wales—Conspiracy to Rescue—Lord Edward's Condition—Harshness of the Government—Refusal to admit his Family—Change for the Worse—Last Interview with Lady Louisa Conolly and his Brother—Death—And Burial—Summing Up.

LORD EDWARD'S friends had lost no time in taking measures to ensure him his best chance of life. Lady Louisa indeed, judging, after her indulgent fashion, by "dear Lord Castlereagh's" distress, felt no doubts as to the good intentions of the Government, so far at least as a strict and impartial administration of justice was concerned. But no effort was left untried by others less confident in the fair dealing of the authorities to obtain the postponement of the trial until such time as the condition of the public nerves, with the absence of the chances of intimidation of jurors and witnesses resulting from the operation of martial law, should promise a more dispassionate treatment of the case than could be hoped for at the present moment of panic.

The Duke of Richmond—moved, as Lord Holland hints, to the greater zeal in the matter by the remembrance of some past acts of unkindness—was urging upon Pitt the necessity of postponement ; and, writing to Lord Henry FitzGerald, he added, after enumerating the obvious dangers which would attend an immediate trial, that he convinced himself that the thing was impossible, and that reasonable delay would be allowed. Fox, who is described as “extremely agitated” about his cousin, though personally of opinion that his presence in Ireland would be more detrimental than favourable to Lord Edward’s cause, held himself, with Lord Holland, in readiness to cross the Channel without delay, should it be otherwise decided by better judges.

Pressure was also to be brought to bear upon those in high places, to induce them to exert themselves upon the prisoner’s behalf.

The Duchess at the feet of the King—such was Colonel Napier’s opinion—might do more than politicians or lawyers. Let her therefore stop at no forms or refusals, and never quit him till a pardon was obtained. It was known that the Duke of York had entertained a personal liking for Lord Edward, and had attempted, though in vain, to obtain the cancelling of his expulsion from the army ; while the Prince of Wales, in a letter full of kindly sympathy for the disaster which had overtaken the Leinster family, alluded to the arch-rebel as “the unfortunate Edward,” and authorised Mr. Ogilvie to intimate to Lord Clare

the satisfaction which would be afforded him by such a delay as might ensure "poor Lord Edward" an impartial trial.

"This, my dear sir," added the Prince, "I have no scruple to admit of your stating in confidence, and with my best compliments to the Lord Chancellor. My long and sincere regard for both the Duchess and Duke of Leinster would have naturally made me wish to exert myself still more, were I not afraid by such exertion I might do more harm than good."¹

Dublin itself had not accepted passively the loss of the popular leader; and a plot having his rescue for its object had been organised by Neilson—poor, violent, irresponsible Neilson, to whose rashness and folly Lord Edward's capture has been partly attributed. It is impossible not to feel compassion for this member of the *dramatis personæ* of the tragedy, void of principle as he was, now breaking his pledges to Government, by whom he had been released from prison upon his undertaking to join no treasonable conspiracy; now trafficking with its agents, not impossibly with the intention of paying them back in their own coin of treachery; at another time crying

¹ It is a curious testimony to the affection which Lord Edward seems to have had the special faculty of inspiring in all who were brought into personal contact with him that it is said that, on the Prince's first interview with the Duchess at this time, he wept with the tenderness of a woman in speaking of him, giving her further the promise that his friend's little son should not be forgotten by him. It was a promise he fulfilled later on, not only by his attitude in the matter of the attainder, but by appointing the boy, so soon as he left school, to be a cornet in his own regiment.

like a child over the body of a dead comrade ; and at the present moment imperilling his own safety by haunting the jail in which his leader was confined, until warned by signs from the sympathetic deputy jailor of the risk he was incurring. It was unlikely that a plot organised by such a head should attain its end ; nor was it probable that the Government, once in possession of Lord Edward's person, would allow him to slip through its fingers. The conspiracy, at any rate, made known to the authorities by means of a priest, was easily brought to nought.

But while all these efforts, at home and in London, were being made on his behalf ; while the news of his capture had fallen like a thunderbolt upon the hundreds of thousands throughout the country who had looked to him as their leader ; while the unhappy people, left almost without guidance, but still passionately refusing to relinquish hope, were rising here and there, to fling themselves in desperation on the troops,—while all this and much more was going on outside, and hearts were breaking for him, the prisoner himself, within the walls of his quiet cell at Newgate, was preparing to render unnecessary the endeavours of his friends to secure him a fair trial. Before the Prince of Wales's letter had been written, he had made good his escape to a place where the arm of the law was powerless to reach him, and where eternal Justice would try his cause.

For the first few days after his arrest, although the ball in his arm could not be extracted, his condition

had caused but little anxiety. The heat of the May weather was, however, unfavourable to his recovery, and certain other injuries, especially a wound in the neck inflicted by a drummer when the affray was over, caused him additional suffering.

For information as to his state his family were compelled to content themselves with second-hand reports, the Government being inexorable in its refusal to permit the visits of either relations or friends. It is, therefore, only through the medium of those admitted to him on the strength of their being neither the one nor the other that any details as to the earlier days of his imprisonment are to be obtained. Yet, even under these circumstances, every one of the few facts recorded bear witness to the same spirit of gentleness, consideration, and courtesy by which he had ever been distinguished.

One of his first visitors seems to have been the son of a friend of Lord Clare's. Gaining admission to the prison on the plea of business with Murphy—also confined in Newgate, and chancing to be a tenant of his father's—he contrived to obtain access to the second and more important captive as well; when Lord Edward, remembering a blow he had seen his unfortunate host receive during the struggle in Thomas Street, enquired faintly after "poor Murphy's face." Lord Holland, too, records as an instance of his cousin's sweetness of nature the debonair good humour with which he took leave of another guest—one of his bitterest enemies—who

had visited him, for what purpose is not stated, in his mangled condition.

"I would shake hands with you willingly," said the prisoner, "but mine are cut to pieces. However, I'll shake a toe, and wish you good-bye."

He was careful to acquit of all malice Major Sirr, from whom his principal wound had been received, differing in this respect from some others who have dealt with the subject, and have directed their invective at a man who, after all, did nothing but his duty.¹

But while each of the few details preserved concerning these days of suffering, bodily and mental, and of disappointment and loneliness, bear the same impress, and point to the absence of any trace of resentment or bitterness, it was not to the men who alone were allowed access to him that the prisoner would be likely to confide his true anxieties, his fears or hopes; or would speak of himself and the cause he had championed. Only when his lips were unsealed by delirium did the thoughts find vent by which it is not possible to doubt that he had been

¹ As an example of similar justice done to Sirr by another member of the family, an entry in Moore's diary, dated August, 1830, may be cited, in which he describes a visit from the Duke of Leinster of that day who called upon the poet, on behalf of Lady Campbell, Lord Edward's daughter, to request him—for what reason does not appear—to postpone the publication of the biography upon which he was then engaged. While the Duke was still with him, Major Sirr, by a curious coincidence, left a card upon Moore, when the latter discovered that his visitor was known to the Duke, who considered him "in his way a good sort of man."

incessantly pursued during those unaccompanied hours of dead quiet, following upon the excitement of the preceding weeks, when the mind, in the exhaustion of fever and pain, must have been haunted, as the day fixed for the rising came and went, by the images of all that might be taking place outside his silent prison. Only in the unconsciousness of fever did he rave, not of his own perilous condition, nor of those he loved so well—of his mother, or Pamela, or his little children—but of Dublin in flames, of militia and numbers. Escaping in spirit from his prison cell, he then imagined himself to be leading on the people to the fight, and was heard crying out, on the evening before his death, in a voice so loud that the shout reached the ears of his fellow-prisoners, and the people outside, mournful and sullen, gathered in the street to listen, “Come on, come on! Damn you, come on!”

The conduct of the Government, in its dealings with its captive, has been severely criticised. Those responsible for the charge of him have been accused of wanton and gratuitous harshness. In forming an opinion on the subject, it is necessary to take into account the nature of the situation, the critical and dangerous condition of the country, the imminence of the projected rebellion, and the menacing attitude of the people. But it is impossible, while making all allowances, to acquit the authorities of at the least a heartless absence of that consideration which, in the case of a sick and, as the event proved,

a dying man, common humanity and kindness might have been expected to dictate.

The course they pursued in declining to admit, up to a few hours before the end, any single friend to the prisoner, even to the exclusion of his wife, may have been pardonable in men acting under the influence of panic.¹ The refusal to permit a personal interview with his lawyer for the purpose of drawing up a will may be explained and justified on the like grounds. The removal, on the day preceding his death, of the officer who had been placed in charge of him, and for whom, with his characteristic readiness to attach himself to those about him, he had conceived a liking, may be interpreted as a tribute to his singular power, so often mentioned, of inspiring affection in those with whom he was brought into personal relationship, and a consequent and pardonable measure of precaution. But it is impossible to advance the same excuses for the fact, disgraceful to all concerned, that so little heed was paid to his condition and the consideration it demanded, that an execution was allowed to take place, on the day before his death, at the very door of the prison, the ominous sounds attending it being audible in his cell.

¹ The assertion that Lady Louisa Conolly was granted an earlier interview with her nephew besides that which took place a few hours before he died, seems to be clearly contradicted, not only by her own letters, but by that addressed by Lord Henry FitzGerald to Lord Camden, in which, recapitulating his causes of complaint against the Government, he includes in the list the refusal to allow his family admission to the prison until his brother was in a moribund condition.

"What noise is that?" he questioned eagerly; and so great a shock was the answer given that, praying earnestly that God would pardon and receive all who fell in the cause of their country, he sank forthwith into the unconsciousness of delirium.

For the oversight to which this last occurrence was attributed by Lord Clare it is just to say that he expressed his regret to Henry FitzGerald, adding the assurance—a somewhat singular one—that it should not happen again. But that the incident should have taken place unknown to the authorities cannot but be considered a strange confession on the part of those charged with the management of affairs.

One exception should be noted to the rule of exclusion enforced against all who might be supposed to feel a personal interest in the prisoner. Lord Edward was proffered the ministrations of the family chaplain. That he preferred to avail himself of those of the chaplain of the jail may possibly afford a clue to an explanation of the indulgence, and points to the possibility that the authorities may have had good reason for the relaxation of their severity in favour of this special gentleman.

The Duke of Leinster was in England, detained there, no doubt, by the critical condition of his wife, whose death occurred only a few months later, and by no lack of affection for his hot-headed brother, over whose fate we hear of him afterwards as "often crying." Of Lord Charles, the strength of whose feelings had, it will be remembered, forced him to quit Dublin



Hoffner, pinx.

Park.

LORD HENRY FITZGERALD.

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some weeks earlier, there is no mention. His mother, whose fortitude, wrote her brother, added a respect and dignity to her sufferings that no heart could resist, ignorant of any imminent danger, set out for Ireland too late. But Henry FitzGerald, only delaying long enough to make a vain attempt to obtain from the Duke of Portland an order admitting him to the prison, crossed the Channel at once, to try what could be done on the spot.

He had been given to understand that his brother's wound caused no anxiety. On his arrival in Dublin, however, he learnt from the surgeons in attendance that the prisoner, though considered by them to be making good progress, had been in danger a few days earlier. Of the measures he took, under these circumstances, to induce the authorities to allow him access to his brother's cell he has himself given an account in a letter to Lord Camden, written the day after Lord Edward's death, in which he arraigns, with passionate bitterness, the whole conduct of the Government towards the dead.

"I implored, I entreated of you to let me see him," he wrote. "I never begged hard before." It was in vain. The Lord Lieutenant remained as inexorable as Lord Clare, to whom he had previously addressed himself.

For the present there seemed, at all events, no pressing cause for anxiety. Even so late as Friday, June 1st, the accounts of the prisoner's condition were still reassuring, although the news of Captain

Ryan's death, which, occurring the previous day, had gravely aggravated the peril of the man to whom it was due, had been a shock ; and the doctor stated in his report that his patient appeared more subject than before, as the pain subsided, to depression of spirits.

On the Saturday the execution of the prisoner Clinch took place, with the effect upon the wounded man which has been described. No intimation of the change in his condition consequent upon it was, however, given to his relations ; while on that very day Stone, the officer to whom in the absence of any single familiar face he had become attached, was removed, a total stranger being substituted in his place.

On the Sunday Lord Henry once more made urgent entreaty to the Chancellor for admission to the prison, receiving a second refusal, the assurance—somewhat equivocally worded—being added, that should his brother, as now seemed possible, arrive at a condition of danger which might justify the indulgence, it would give Lord Clare singular pleasure to grant it.

That pleasure was quickly afforded to the Chancellor. Towards evening on the same day the intimation was made to Lord Henry by the surgeons that it was unlikely that their charge would survive the night. A prisoner named Dowling, likewise confined in Newgate, had also not only contrived the previous night—possibly by the connivance of the same deputy jailor who had cautioned Neilson as to his peril—

to gain access for a few moments to Lord Edward, then in the unconsciousness of delirium, but had managed to convey a warning of his condition to his brother. "Seeing you, or any friend he has confidence in, would, I think, be more conducive to his recovery than fifty surgeons," wrote his fellow-captive, adding the curious assurance, "We'll watch him as well as is in our power."

But the time was fast coming when the prisoner would stand in need of neither watching nor care—neither the loving, impotent care of those in like case with himself as they listened to the ravings which reached their ears through the thick walls; nor of that of poor Henry FitzGerald, half maddened by the thought of his brother, "possessed of the tenderness of a woman to all whom he loved," left alone in his hour of greatest need; nor yet of the watchful care of the Government, who, guard him as they might, could not shut the prison door against the great deliverer.

He was not, after all, to die without a sight of a familiar face. Information had been sent to Lady Louisa Conolly of the condition of her nephew; and she made a last despairing effort to move the Lord Lieutenant from the almost incredible harshness of his attitude. But she made it in vain. With the dogged obstinacy of a weak man he refused, in spite of her entreaties, to cancel the orders of exclusion.

"I who never before knelt to aught save my

God," said Lady Louisa, her confidence in the kindness and consideration of the Government possibly shaken, "grovelled at that man's feet in vain."

A last expedient, however, suggested itself to the niece, Emily Napier, by whom she had been accompanied in her fruitless quest. It was that, as a last resource, an appeal to the Chancellor should be made.

It might have seemed a forlorn hope, since earlier in the day he had rejected the petition of the dying man's brother, but it was tried. Dinner was scarcely over when his house was reached ; and Lord Clare, coming out to Lady Louisa's carriage, listened, not without emotion, to her entreaty. After a moment's consideration he made answer that, though it was out of the question for him to give her the order for admittance she solicited, in view of the express decision of the Council against it, there was no such obstacle to prohibit his taking her himself to the prison. The boon so long denied was at length, only just in time, wrung from those who had so persistently refused it.

Calling at Leinster House for Lord Henry on the way, Lady Louisa proceeded at once to Newgate, escorted by the Chancellor, who, arrived at the prison, cleared the cell of all other witnesses, himself remaining apart, crying like a woman at the sight of the dying man. It is one thing to compass a man's death, another to see him die ; and it is curious to contrast the Chancellor's present attitude with the letter in

which, not a fortnight earlier, he had congratulated himself upon the prospect of obtaining such evidence as would enable the Government to bring the arch-rebel, at the head of the other leading traitors, to justice.

The visit had been well timed. The delirium of fever had passed into the quiet exhaustion preceding the end. That evening Lord Edward had asked the surgeon who was attending him to read to him the Death of our Lord ; had, as Lady Louisa expressed it, "composed his dear mind with prayer"; and now recognised with tranquil satisfaction his brother and his aunt.

"It is heaven to me to see you," he said, the words marking, better than any complaint, what the previous loneliness had been to his clinging and loving spirit.

"I can't see you," he objected soon afterwards ; then, when Lady Louisa shifted her position so as to bring herself within his range of vision, he kissed her hand, and smiled at her, "which I shall never forget," she told Mr. Ogilvie, describing to him the scene, "though I saw death in his dear face at the time."

She might well see it. He had already reached a place to which the echoes of this troublesome world penetrate but faintly, and where the violence of grief and joy is hushed. Though he had imagined Henry FitzGerald to be still in England, he expressed no surprise at his presence, only a quiet content, as the

two brothers who had been so dear to one another in life met and kissed in the shadow of death.

"That is very pleasant," he answered, on hearing they were alone ; falling back into silence while he was told of his wife's safe journey to England, and of her meeting with his brother on the road.

"And the children, too?" he asked, adding vaguely, "She is a charming woman."

"I knew it must come to this," he said dreamily, "and we must all go." Then, his mind wandering from the present to the past, with all its schemes and hopes and calculations, he rambled a little, busy again with militia and numbers, till his aunt begged him not to agitate himself by talking of such subjects.

"Well, I won't," he said obediently, and presently fell once more into a condition of drowsy silence, his eyes resting the while with full contentment on his brother's face.

The time to leave him came. Lord Clare was waiting. There was nothing more to say, nothing to be done.

"We told him," said Lady Louisa, "that as he appeared inclined to sleep we would wish him good-night and return in the morning. He said, 'Do, do,' but did not express any uneasiness at our leaving him."

The pain of separation, the supreme bitterness of death, for him was over.

And so he parted from his friends. Gently, as he had lived, he was dying. Not three hours after

Lady Louisa had wished him good-night, he was indeed sleeping well, for his spirit had passed away.¹

At dead of night they carried him, three days later, to his burial; fearing lest, in their grief and indignation, the people who had loved him might be moved to some act of desperate vengeance. They had reason to fear it.

For a Chief
Grief
Weeps with a sword.

“For us,” wrote Wolfe Tone, the comrade who, knowing him little, honoured him much—“for us who remain as yet, and may perhaps soon follow him, the only way to lament his death is to endeavour to revenge it.”

The conduct of the Government towards him whilst yet living was consistently carried out, by the neglect of those in authority to pay ordinary respect to the dead by supplying the promised guard, to secure the funeral from molestation at the hands of the Orangemen employed to patrol the streets. The coffin was, in consequence, stopped no less than four times as it passed from Newgate to St. Werburgh’s Church, in charge of the young officer to whom it was entrusted—the same who had had the care of

¹ The statement made in a paper written by Miss Emily Napier (see Appendix to *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*) to the effect that Lady Louisa and Lord Henry remained until all was over, is clearly contradicted both by Lady Louisa’s own account and by the letter of the surgeon to her announcing the death: “He drew his last breath at two o’clock this morning, after a struggle that began soon after his friends left him last night.”

the prisoner till the day preceding his death, and who, with a man named Shiel, probably a servant of the FitzGeralds, was the single mourner by whom he was accompanied to his grave. It was only at two o'clock in the morning that, orders having been tardily despatched from the Castle to that effect, the melancholy procession was permitted to reach its destination, and the coffin was placed below the chancel of the church.

The arrangement was intended at the time to be merely temporary. There, however, it has remained ever since, standing by itself in a small, white-washed vault, one of many which honeycomb the ground below the building. Above the entrance to these vaults there have been found, built into the southern wall of the church, sculptured figures bearing the arms of the Geraldines. Upon the outer case of the coffin, added some thirty years ago, is now inscribed the name of the dead, with the dates of birth and death. But the story is told, with what amount of truth it is impossible to say, that seeking in vain, long years after the funeral had taken place, to identify her father's coffin, Lord Edward's daughter was referred to an old and dying pauper. From him she learnt that, hanging about the precincts of the prison on that June night, he had watched six men carry forth the coffin containing all that was left of the people's leader ; that he had followed it to its resting-place, had stolen into the vault where it was laid, and, remaining behind alone with the dead, had scratched upon it with a nail the initials E. F. It is further



Photo. by T. W. Rolleston.

SOUTH WALL OF ST. WERBURGH'S CHURCH.

related that, returning to the church, Lady Campbell found the coffin as described, its solitary mark of identification being the letters traced by the pauper's hand.

So Edward FitzGerald lived and died and was buried.

There is a legend of his race which tells how, every seven years, there may be seen an Earl of Kildare, who rides across the Curragh on a white charger, silver-shod. And the people say that when the shoes of the horse are worn off, his master will return to destroy the enemies of Ireland. But whether or not, in days to come, any Geraldine shall ever again set himself to carry on the old tradition, it is certain that no purer or more gallant and chivalrous spirit will ever rise to champion the oppressed than breathed in Lord Edward FitzGerald.

Whether he is to be regarded as hero or criminal, patriot or traitor, must be determined, as Southey declared, by a reference to the maxims of eternal morality and positive law. It is a question each man will decide for himself. But whatever the answer may be, it cannot be denied that he was, in the phraseology of the same writer, a martyr of rebellion. It is as a martyr that his memory has been kept green by the Irish people.

"For Edward's precious blood," said O'Connor bitterly, "not even the semblance of an inquisition has been had."

He was wrong. For the blood of Edward Fitz-

Gerald inquisition has been made by every generation of his countrymen since the day when he lay dead in his Newgate cell.

And who shall pronounce him wholly unfortunate? He died, indeed, in the flower of his manhood, a champion of a lost cause, a soldier in the ranks of a beaten army. But his life was given for that which he held to be worthy of the sacrifice. Living, he was surrounded by a band of comrades who, whatever might be their failings, were as free from petty jealousies of class and creed, ignoble personal ambitions, and sordid private grudges, as any that ever gathered under the banners of his ancestors ; and he died—more fortunate than some who have occupied his place in the affections of a generous, warm-hearted, and unstable people—encompassed by the love and the fealty of the nation he served.

APPENDIX A

FUNERAL OF LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD

THE following letters from Lady Louisa Conolly are curious evidence of the indifference and negligence of the ministerial officials with regard to Lord Edward's funeral. The first was docketed by Lord Henry FitzGerald: "From Lady Louisa Conolly, in consequence of a complaint made to her of the indecent neglect in Mr. Cook's office, by Mr. Leeson. A guard was to have attended at Newgate, the night of my poor brother's burial, in order to provide against all interruption from the different guards and patrols in the streets:—it never arrived, which caused the funeral to be several times stopped in its way, so that the burial did not take place till near two in the morning, and the people attending [were] obliged to stay in the church until a pass could be procured to enlarge them."

LADY LOUISA CONOLLY TO THE HON. JOHN
LEESON.

CASTLETOWN, *June 13th*, 1798.

DEAR SIR,—

I received both your letters, and acquainted the Lord Lieutenant with the neglect in Mr. Cook's office, as I thought it right that he should know it, to prevent mischief for the future

on such occasions. The grief I have been in, and still do feel, is so much above any other sensation, that the want of respect to my feelings on that melancholy occasion was not worth any notice.

Dear sir, your humble servant,
L. O. CONOLLY.

LADY LOUISA CONOLLY TO WILLIAM OGILVIE, ESQ.

. . . The dear remains were deposited by Mr. Bourne in St. Werburgh Church, until the times would permit of their being removed to the family vault at Kildare. I ordered everything upon that occasion that appeared to me to be right, considering all the heart-breaking circumstances belonging to the event; and I was guided by the feelings which I am persuaded our beloved angel would have had upon the same occasion, had he been to direct for *me*, as it fell to my lot to do for *him*. I well knew that to run the smallest risk of shedding *one drop of blood*, by any riot intervening upon that mournful occasion, would be the thing of all others that would vex him most; and knowing also how much he despised all outward show, I submitted to what I thought prudence required. The impertinence and neglect (in Mr. Cook's office) of orders (notwithstanding Lord Castlereagh had arranged everything as I wished it) had nearly caused what I had taken such pains to avoid. However, happily, nothing happened; but I informed Lord Camden of the neglect, for the sake of others, and to prevent mischief on other occasions, where a similar neglect might have such bad consequences. You may easily believe that my grief absorbed all other feelings, and Mr. — is too insignificant even to be angry at. At any other time than this his impertinence might amuse one, but now it passes unnoticed.

APPENDIX B

THE BILL OF ATTAINDER

THE Attorney-General, Toler, brought in a Bill of Attainder, for the purpose of confiscating Lord Edward FitzGerald's property, on July 27th, 1798. After much discussion it was read for the third time in the Irish House of Commons, and passed by a majority of 42 to 9. Having also been passed by the House of Lords, it was sent to England in September for the Royal Assent, which it received in October, in spite of a petition presented to the King by Lord Henry FitzGerald, as guardian to the children, and the Duke of Richmond, Charles James Fox, William Ogilvie, Henry Edward Fox, and Lord Holland, as their near relations. A separate petition was also presented by their grandmother, the Duchess of Leinster. The sequel as regards the estate may be told in Moore's words. "Lord Clare having, with the approbation of the Government, allowed the estate to be sold in Chancery—under the foreclosure of a mortgage to which the Attorney-General was made a party—Mr. Ogilvie became the purchaser of it for £10,500; and having, by his good management of the property, succeeded in paying off the mortgage and the judgment debts, he had the satisfaction, at the end of a few years, of seeing the estate restored

to its natural course of succession by settling it upon Lord Edward's son and his heirs for ever" (Moore's Life).

In 1799 Lady Louisa Conolly and Mr. Ogilvie applied in vain for a reversal of the attainder. In 1815, when the position occupied by the Prince of Wales as Regent offered a better chance of success, the matter was again to be brought forward; when, in consequence of the landing of Napoleon in France, Lord Castlereagh advised that the question should be postponed. Only in 1819, twenty-one years after Lord Edward's death—was the attainder finally repealed.

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